



Meningitis

Parent Resource Template

This document is only a template resource. If the template is used, please customize the document to include district's/school's nursing practices and branding.

DEFINITION

- Meningitis is swelling of the tissues covering the brain and spinal cord.
- Bacterial Meningitis can be deadly and requires immediate medical attention. Vaccines are available to help protect against some kinds of bacterial meningitis.
- Viral Meningitis is serious, but often less severe than bacterial meningitis. People with normal immune systems who get viral meningitis usually get better on their own. There are also vaccines to prevent some kinds of viral meningitis.

SYMPTOMS

- Fever
- Headache, sensitivity to light.
- Sometimes a dark red or purple rash.
- Stiff neck (pain when trying to touch the chin to the chest).
- Loss of appetite, nausea and/or vomiting.
- Irritability, confusion.
- Difficult to arouse, loss of consciousness, or seizures.

HOW IT IS SPREAD

- Contact with respiratory secretions (coughing and sneezing).
- Sharing throat secretions (saliva or spit) by kissing, sharing food utensils, or sharing drinks.
- People who have weak immune systems and people who live in community settings (like college dorms) are most susceptible.

PREVENTION

- Good handwashing.
- Cover coughs and sneezes.
- Avoid sharing food, drinks, or utensils.
- Receive immunizations for meningitis.

TREATMENT

- A physician will determine the best treatment based on the type of meningitis.
- Bacterial meningitis is treated with antibiotics and treatment should start as soon as possible.
- Hospitalization may be required.

RETURN TO SCHOOL

- Exclude from school as soon as it is suspected.
- Return to school when cleared by a health professional and when the child is feeling well enough to participate.

Created by:
Health Services Nurses
West Ada School District

Information compiled from American Academy of Pediatrics and Center for Disease Control