



ASEPTIC MENINGITIS (VIRAL MENINGITIS) FACT SHEET

WHAT IS VIRAL MENINGITIS?

Viral meningitis is the most common type of meningitis, an inflammation of the tissue that covers the brain and spinal cord. It is often less severe than bacterial meningitis. Non-polio enteroviruses are the most common cause of viral meningitis in the United States, especially from late spring to fall when these viruses spread most often. These viruses are found in an infected person's stool, saliva, nasal mucus, and blister fluid.

HOW DO YOU GET VIRAL MENINGITIS?

Viral Meningitis can be spread by:

Having close contact, such as touching or shaking hands, with an infected person

Touching objects or surfaces that have the virus on them

Changing diapers of an infected person

Drinking water that has the virus in it

In some cases, pregnant women who are infected can pass the virus to their babies.

SYMPTOMS

Fever, headache, stiff neck, sensitivity to bright light, nausea, vomiting, lack of appetite, and a lack of energy. Common symptoms in babies include fever, irritability, poor eating, and a lack of energy. Symptoms appear anywhere from 2-21 days after exposure, depending on which virus you become infected with.

TREATMENT

In most cases, there is no specific treatment for viral meningitis. Most people who get viral meningitis completely recover on their own within 7 to 10 days. Discuss treatment options with your doctor.

PREVENTION

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze

- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after changing diapers, using the restroom, or coughing or blowing your nose.
- Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces such as toys, doorknobs, tables, and counters.
- Stay home when you are sick.

DPHD EFFORTS

Reports of suspected and confirmed cases of disease are made to the Delaware Public Health District (DPHD). The DPHD investigates potential sources of illness, conducts surveillance for the spread of disease, and engages in community outreach and education.