

Aseptic Meningitis

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Aseptic meningitis is an inflammation of the meninges, the thin membranes that cover the brain and spinal cord. This type of meningitis may be caused by one of several different viruses or fungi (including yeasts); or it may be a reaction or autoimmune response to certain viral illnesses. Viral meningitis is contagious. Risk increases following certain viral illnesses including rubella, measles, and some strains of influenza (flu); in immune-compromised individuals due to illness or medications, or others with lowered resistance; and meningitis epidemics.

Symptoms may include:

- Fever
- Headache
- Stiff neck
- Irritability
- Sensitivity to light
- Nausea and vomiting
- Lethargy and confusion

{mospagebreak title=What your doctor can do}

What your doctor can do:

- Diagnostic testing may include laboratory blood tests, examination of cerebrospinal fluid (the fluid that surrounds the brain and spinal cord)
- CT or MRI (a noninvasive scan) of the brain

Treatment includes:

- Probable hospitalization
- Medications may be given to control pain, nausea, and fever.
- Although viruses do not respond to antibiotics, until it is determined

that the meningitis is not caused by a bacteria, you may be given antibiotics.

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Antifungal drugs may be used if a fungus is the cause

{mospagebreak title=What you can do}

What you can do:

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Avoid using aspirin or other over-the-counter anti-inflammatories (Aleve) that may cause bleeding.

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Keep immunizations up to date in order to avoid certain viral infections that may lead to meningitis

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Rest in bed and drink plenty of fluids, especially water; at least 6 to 8 glasses daily.

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Keep curtains closed and lights low due to oversensitivity to light.

What you can expect:

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Viral meningitis must run its course.

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There are no medications to cure it.

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Possible complications include permanent brain damage (rare), and muscle damage or paralysis (uncommon).

Contact your doctor if you suffer symptoms of meningitis, if during treatment new unexplained symptoms develop, or if treatment side effects occur.