

ALLEGAN COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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Office Administration

(269) 673-5411

Bioterrorism Preparedness

673-5411

Personal Health

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Communicable Disease

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Environmental Health

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Resource Recovery

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Viral Meningitis (Aseptic Meningitis)

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. Non-polio enteroviruses are the most common cause of meningitis in the United States. Viral meningitis is relatively common but rarely serious, and recovery is usually complete.

How is it spread?

If you have close contact with a person who has viral meningitis, you may become infected with the virus that made that person sick.

What are the symptoms?

Common symptoms in babies include fever, irritability, poor eating, sleepiness or trouble waking up from sleep, and lethargy (lack of energy). Common symptoms in children and adults may include fever, headache, nausea and vomiting, stiff neck, sensitivity to bright light, lack of energy, lethargy. Most people with mild viral meningitis get better on their own in 7-10 days. Initial symptoms of viral meningitis are similar to those for bacterial meningitis. It is important to see a health care provider right away if you think you or your child might have meningitis.

When is it OK to return to school or a group setting?

Is ok to a group setting when recovered, with authorization from a health care provider.

Other Important Information/Prevention

There is no vaccine to protect against non-polio enteroviruses, which are the most common cause of viral meningitis. You can take the following steps to help lower your chances of getting infected or spreading them to other people:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after changing diapers, using the toilet, coughing, or blowing your nose
- Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands
- Avoid close contact such as kissing, hugging, sharing cups or utensils with people who are sick
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your upper shirt sleeve; not your hands
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces, such as toys and doorknobs, especially if someone is sick
- Stay home when you are sick
- Avoid bites from mosquitoes and other insects that carry diseases that can infect humans

More information is available at www.cdc.gov/meningitis

This fact sheet is not intended to replace the advice of your physician. Please contact your healthcare provider if you have concerns regarding your or your child's health. If you have general questions, you may contact an Allegan County Public Health Nurse at 269-673-5411.