



Viral Meningitis

Your child may have been exposed to viral meningitis. Viral meningitis is swelling of the thin lining covering the brain and spinal cord. It is usually caused by enteroviruses.

If you think your child has viral meningitis:

- Tell your childcare provider or call the school.
- **Keep your child home from childcare** until diarrhea and vomiting have stopped.
- School aged children do not need to stay home, unless they are not feeling well and/or have diarrhea and need to use the bathroom frequently.
- For more information, call Hennepin County HSPHD-Epidemiology at 612-543-5230 or call your local health department.

Parent/Guardian information

Symptoms

Your child may be unusually tired and suddenly have a fever, headache, stiff neck, and/or rash. Other symptoms may be sore throat, diarrhea, and vomiting. It is hard to tell if babies have viral meningitis. Babies with the virus may have a fever and may also be fussy, refuse to eat, or be difficult to wake.

If your child is infected, it may take from 2 to 21 days for symptoms to start. Symptoms usually take less than 4 days to begin.

Spread

- By coughing or sneezing.
- By touching hands, objects, or surfaces that have been contaminated with stool.

Contagious period

Varies, but the virus usually spreads for 1 to 3 weeks after symptoms start. Virus may remain in the stool for up to 8 weeks.

Call your health care provider

- If anyone in your home has symptoms. Your doctor may want to test for the virus.

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Prevention

- Cover nose and mouth when coughing and sneezing. Use a tissue or your sleeve. Dispose of used tissues in the trash.
- Wash hands after touching anything that could be contaminated with secretions from the mouth or nose or with stool. Wash hands before preparing food or eating. Your child may need help with handwashing.
- Do not share drink containers, water bottles, straws, silverware, cigarettes, lip balm, toothbrushes, or other things that come in contact with the mouth. Wash all dishes with hot soapy water between uses.
- Clean and disinfect any objects that come in contact with stool or secretions from the nose or mouth. This includes toilets, potty chairs, sinks, toys, diaper changing areas, and surfaces. Use a product that kills germs.

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Updated February 2025

