

# FactSheet

Para Su Información

## Viral (Aseptic) Meningitis

### What is viral meningitis?

Meningitis is an infection of the tissues that cover the brain and the spinal cord that can be caused by bacteria, viruses, or fungi. Viral or aseptic meningitis is the most common type of meningitis and is the least serious.

### Who gets viral meningitis?

Anyone can get viral meningitis, but it is more common in young children, particularly in children under 1 year of age.

### How serious is viral meningitis?

Viral meningitis is a mild disease, and most people recover completely within 10 days.

### How is viral meningitis spread?

Viral meningitis does not generally spread from person-to-person. The viruses that most often cause viral meningitis are common and may be spread through contact with an infected person's saliva, sputum, nasal secretions, or feces (stool). However, most people who are exposed to these viruses do not develop meningitis because the tissues of the brain and spinal cord are well-protected from infection. When exposed to the viruses, some people will develop only a fever and a rash, and others will have no symptoms at all.

### What are the symptoms of viral meningitis?

Signs and symptoms of viral meningitis vary and may include headache, fever, stiff neck, and sensitivity to light.

### How soon after exposure do symptoms appear?

It usually takes from 3-7 days for symptoms to appear.

### Should people with viral meningitis be isolated?

It is not necessary to isolate people with viral meningitis but the infected person and those in close contact should wash their hands frequently.

### What should I do if I believe I have viral meningitis?

If you believe you have viral meningitis, you should contact a physician or go to an emergency room as soon as possible to rule out the more severe bacterial forms of the disease.

### How is viral meningitis treated?

No specific treatments are available at this time. Antibiotics, while effective against the more serious bacterial meningitis, are not effective against viral meningitis. Doctors will often recommend bed rest and fluids and may prescribe medication to relieve headache and fever.

### Where can I get more information about viral meningitis?

Contact your doctor or the Southern Nevada Health District Office of Epidemiology at (702) 759-1300.



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Updated 8-06