

Mission:

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



Rick Scott
Governor

John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS
State Surgeon General & Secretary

Vision: To be the **Healthiest State** in the Nation

VIRAL MENINGITIS

What is Viral Meningitis?

Viral meningitis is most often caused by enteroviruses during the summer months however it can also be caused by mumps, the Herpesvirus, and some viruses spread by mosquitoes (arboviruses). These viruses infect the meninges, or the covering of the brain and spinal cord, causing meningitis. Viral meningitis is generally less severe than bacterial meningitis.

What are the signs and symptoms of a Viral Meningitis infection?

Symptoms of a viral meningitis infection include a sudden onset of fever, headache, and stiff neck however can also include nausea, vomiting, photophobia (sensitivity to light), and altered mental status and irritability.

How are Viral Meningitis infections spread?

Enteroviruses that cause meningitis are most often spread from person to person by fecal contamination from improper hand washing after using the toilet or changing of diapers. It can also be spread by respiratory secretions such as saliva from an infected individual.

What is the incubation period of Viral Meningitis and how long is it contagious?

The incubation period and length the virus is contagious varies by the virus causing infection. The most commonly caused enterovirus lasts 3-6 days.

What should I do if I think I have a Viral Meningitis infection?

Viral Meningitis is not a reportable disease and does not need to be reported to the Health Department. Persons who have these symptoms should see their physicians. Most patients recover on their own without treatment within 7-10 days however hospital treatment may be necessary for severe cases or for individuals with weak immune systems.

How can I prevent myself and others from getting a Viral Meningitis infection?

There is no specific treatment for viral meningitis and antibiotics are not used to treat infection. There is also no vaccine for the most common viruses that cause infection therefore preventing infection with the virus is the best method to prevent viral meningitis. Prevention methods include proper hand washing especially after using the toilet, changing diapers, and after coughing or blowing your nose. Good housekeeping and disinfection practices as well as avoiding sharing drinks, utensils, and cosmetics with sick individuals are also recommended.

For more information, please contact the Florida Department of Health in Orange County Epidemiology Program at 407-858-1420. You may also visit the Epidemiology Program website, <http://orange.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/infectious-disease-services/epidemiology/index.html>, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website, <http://www.cdc.gov/meningitis/viral.html>, or the OCHD School Health website at <http://orange.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/clinical-and-nutrition-services/school-health/index.html> for additional information.

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