

<b>Cause</b>	A multitude of viruses; 70 – 90% of case are due to enteroviruses, such as: coxsackievirus or echovirus)
<b>Symptoms</b>	<p>Meningitis can produce mild symptoms, such as headache, low-grade fever and tiredness lasting two to three days, in some patients. In other patients, the symptoms can be severe and begin suddenly with fever, headache and stiff neck accompanied by some combination of other symptoms: decreased appetite, nausea, vomiting, sensitivity to bright light, confusion and sleepiness.</p> <p>In newborns and infants, the classic findings of fever, headache and stiff neck may or may not be present. An infant may have no other symptoms than being listless, irritable, and sleepy, having little interest in feeding and possibly vomiting.</p>
<b>Spread</b>	Meningitis is not highly contagious. Viral meningitis may be spread through direct contact with nose and throat secretions. Sharing a glass, cup, or eating utensil, coughing or sneezing into the face of another person, or sharing other items that go into the mouth are possible ways of spreading the infection.
<b>Incubation Period</b>	Varies with the specific virus. Enteroviruses, usually 3 to 14 days.
<b>Period of Communicability</b>	Also varies with the specific virus. Enteroviruses are communicable during and possibly for several weeks after illness (through contact with stool). Infected persons who may not seem ill are able to spread infection.
<b>Diagnosis</b>	A doctor may order various tests to isolate the virus. Cerebrospinal fluid is one that can be tested to determine the type of meningitis causing the symptoms and guide treatment as indicated. A stool specimen may also be collected.
<b>Treatment</b>	Antibiotics are not effective against a viral infection. Supportive treatment only.
<b>Prevention/Control</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Good hand washing as well as good cough hygiene (covering nose/mouth and discarding soiled tissues).</li><li>2. Not sharing any utensils or items put in the mouth.</li><li>3. Disinfect articles soiled by or in contact with an infected person.</li><li>4. Report all cases to the local health department.</li></ol>
<b>Exclusion</b>	Must be free of fever or diarrhea and well enough to participate in activities.