



Meningitis Topic Home

Meningitis is an infection of the fluid of a person's spinal cord and the fluid that surrounds the brain. People sometimes refer to it as *spinal meningitis*.

Is it Viral or Bacterial?

Meningitis is usually caused by a viral or bacterial infection. Knowing whether meningitis is caused by a virus or bacterium is important because the severity of illness and the treatment differ. Viral meningitis is generally less severe and resolves without specific treatment, while bacterial meningitis can be quite severe and may result in brain damage, hearing loss, or learning disability. It also is important to know which type of bacteria is causing the meningitis because antibiotics can prevent some types from spreading and infecting other people. See [causes of meningitis...](#)

Bacterial Meningitis

- **Meningococcal Disease**
Answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs), and links to technical and clinical information, articles, references, and other websites
- **Bacterial Meningitis Overview**
Provides overview of causes and symptoms of bacterial meningitis with links to additional resources
- **Meningococcal Vaccination**
Goes to CDC's Vaccines site which provides details about the meningococcal vaccine, plus resources for health consumers and healthcare professionals
- **Control and Prevention**
Provides recommendations for prevention and control with links to vaccine and infection control guidelines
- **In College Students**
Provides links to resources, including vaccine recommendations, guidelines, and information from the American College Health Association (ACHA)
- **Meningitis and Travel**
Provides links to CDC's Travelers' Health website on meningococcal disease and guidelines for management of exposed airline passengers
- **In the Laboratory**
View the manual for Laboratory Methods for the Diagnosis of Meningococcal Disease
- **In Other Countries**
Offers links to websites for the World Health Organization (WHO), United Kingdom Department of Health, and CDC's Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response strategy
- **Causes of Bacterial Meningitis**
There are several causes of bacterial meningitis, including *Neisseria meningitides*, *Streptococcus pneumoniae*,

Group B streptococcal disease, and Haemophilus influenzae serotype b (Hib)

Viral Meningitis

- **Viral (Aseptic) Meningitis FAQs**
Answers to frequently asked questions
- **Lymphocytic Choriomeningitis Virus (LCMV)**
Provides facts, risks, and prevention information on this rodent-borne viral infectious disease that causes aseptic meningitis



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Page Located on the Web at <http://www.cdc.gov/meningitis/>

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