VIRAL MENINGITIS (non-bacterial Meningitis)

Viral meningitis is an infection of the meninges (a thin lining covering the brain and spinal cord) by any one of a number of different viruses. It is a fairly common disease. Almost all of the cases occur as single, isolated events. Outbreaks are rare.

Who gets viral meningitis?

Anyone can get viral meningitis but it occurs most often in children.

Which Viruses cause this form of meningitis?

Approximately half of the cases in the United States are due to common enterovirusus (intestinal). Occasionally, children will have viral meningitis associates with mumps or herpes virus infection. Mosquito-borne viruses also account for a few cases each year. In many cases, the virus cannot be identified.

How are the viruses that cause viral meningitis spread?

Because a number of different viruses are capable of causing viral meningitis, the manner in which the virus is spread depends upon the type of virus involved. Some are spread by person-to-person contact; others can be spread by insects.

What are the symptoms?

The symptoms may include fever, headache, stiff neck and fatigue. Rash, sore throat, intestinal symptoms and vomiting may also occur.

How soon do symptoms appear?

Symptoms generally appear within one week of exposure.

Is a person with viral meningitis contagious?

Some of the viruses that cause viral meningitis are contagious while others, such as the mosquito-borne viruses, cannot be spread from person to person. Fortunately, most people exposed to these viruses experience mild or no symptoms. Most people are exposed to these viruses at some time in their lives, but few actually develop meningitis.

How is viral Meningitis treated?

There are no specific medicines or antibiotics used to treat viral meningitis.

Seeing Your Provider

Ridgefield Pediatrics strongly suggest that parents whose children are seeing any of the symptoms noted above, call our office and have the child seen.