



BACTERIAL MENINGITIS FAST FACTS

- Meningitis is an infection of the membranes that protect the brain and spinal cord. Meningitis is most often caused by a virus (viral meningitis), but can also be caused by bacteria (bacterial meningitis). Bacterial meningitis is rare, but is usually serious. It can be life-threatening, if not treated right away.
- **Common examples of how people spread these germs include:**
 - During childbirth,
 - Coughing or sneezing when in close contact with others,
 - Sharing saliva, or
 - Eating contaminated food.
- **Symptoms in babies may be hard to spot, if they show symptoms at all.** Symptoms, in babies, can include:
 - Being slow or inactive,
 - Irritability,
 - Vomiting,
 - Having a bulging fontanelle (the “soft spot” on a baby’s head),
 - Feeding poorly, or
 - Having abnormal reflexes.
- **Bacterial meningitis can cause death. However, most people get better.** Those who do recover can have lifelong disabilities, such as brain damage, hearing loss, learning disabilities, and even loss of limb(s).
- **Babies, young children, and people in group settings**, such as daycares, schools, and college and military dormitories are more likely to get infected with bacterial meningitis.
- **Vaccines are the best way to prevent types of bacterial meningitis.** There are vaccines for four types of bacteria that can cause meningitis:
 - Meningococcal vaccines (MenACWY and MenB)
 - Pneumococcal vaccines (PCV15 or PCV20)
 - Haemophilus influenzae serotype b (Hib) vaccines
 - Bacille Calmette-Guérin (BCG) vaccine



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