

Do you want to know?

Meningitis

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What is it?

Meningitis is an inflammation of the meninges (membranes that cover the brain and spinal cord). The inflammation may result from an acute infection of the meninges caused by the invasion of bacteria, viruses, fungi or parasites. The most common symptoms include high temperature with intense headache, nausea and vomiting, neck stiffness, and possibly rash with pink spots. Decreased level of consciousness and coma often occurs. The infection may be transmitted by direct contact through droplets from the nose or throat of infected persons (sneezing, coughing).

What do you need to know?

Drugs



- Meningitis is a serious infectious disease that has to be treated in the hospital.
- Follow the instructions of your physician carefully before admission and after discharge from the hospital.
- Take anti-infective drugs as prescribed by your physician.
- Use medications to control your pain and temperature and keep your physician informed about any developments.

Diet



- Encourage oral fluids to prevent dehydration (loss of fluids from the body) related to high temperature and vomiting.
- Maintain a well balanced diet to enhance recovery and compensate for energy loss.

Activity



- Keep adequate level of activity as tolerated. Periods

of bed rest are good for comfort and conserving energy.

- Avoid any sudden or unnecessary movements of head and neck and extreme neck flexion. Maintain the alignment of your body while turning or moving to decrease the pressure in the brain.
- Have someone assist you with activities and movements.



Therapeutic Measures

- Carefully treat high temperature by drinking plenty of fluids, doing sponge baths and taking medications.
- Place a blanket roll under the knees to relieve muscle aches and pain in back and joints.
- Dim the light and provide ice packs on forehead to relieve headache.
- Keep head slightly elevated to decrease the pressure in the brain.
- Monitor fluid intake and urine output.

Considerations



- Encourage your contacts to be examined and immunized or treated.
- Avoid unnecessary environmental stimuli to prevent excitation. A calm environment is desirable.
- Report to the physician increase of symptoms.
- Avoid contamination with items or articles freshly soiled by discharges from nose, throat or any skin lesion.

INSTRUCTIONS

The content of this educational leaflet is of general information. Ask your physician or health care provider if this content applies to you.

Prepared by the Nursing Services in coordination with other health care disciplines.