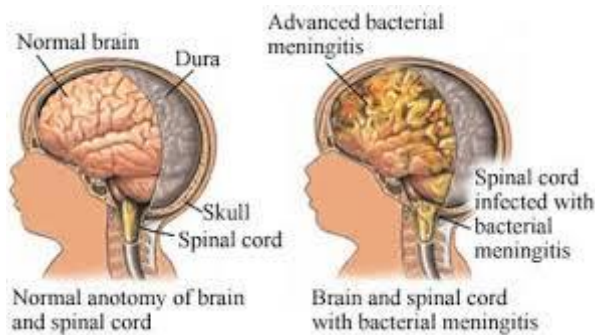


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## WHAT IS CEREBROSPINAL MENINGITIS (CSM)?

Cerebrospinal Meningitis (CSM) is a very serious infection that can sometimes lead to fatal consequences.



CSM is an acute inflammation of the membranes covering the brain and the spinal cord (meninges). This condition is classified as a medical emergency. According to the World Health Organization (WHO) about 10 -15 % of patients diagnosed with CSM die (<http://www.who.int/en/>).

## CAUSES OF CSM

Meningitis can be caused by bacterial, viral, fungi and even chemicals. In our environment, the leading cause is bacterial. Bacterial meningitis is caused by various bacterial pathogens. *Neisseria meningitidis*, *Streptococcus pneumoniae* and *Haemophilus influenzae* type B are the triad responsible for over 80% of all cases of bacterial meningitis.

Under certain environmental conditions such as dry weather, dusty winds, high temperatures during the day and cold temperatures at night (especially during the harmattan season from October to March), the virulence of these otherwise naturally existing microorganisms increases, causing sporadic outbreaks of cerebrospinal meningitis. People living in overcrowded conditions, poorly ventilated houses and generally poor sanitary conditions are very vulnerable to respiratory infections, and this encourages the growth and survival of the bacteria.

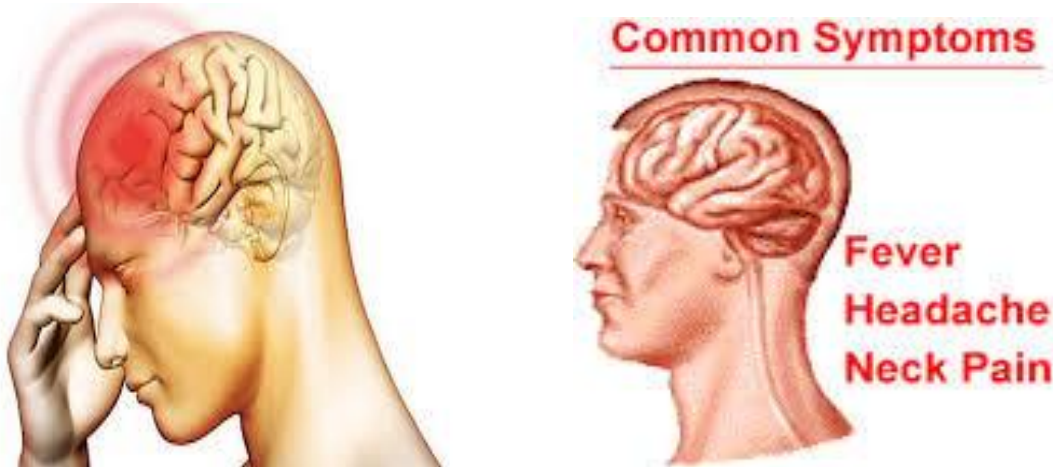


## MODE OF TRANSMISSION

Bacterial and viral meningitis are contagious and can be transmitted through tiny droplets of respiratory secretions from infected person during close contact such as kissing, coughing or sneezing on someone, as well as sharing of eating or drinking utensils. Carrier rates may be as high as 25% during endemic periods and as high as 50% during epidemics. Incubation periods vary from 2 to 10 days.

Anyone can contract meningitis, but people whose bodies have trouble fighting infections are more susceptible.

### **SYMPTOMS OF CSM**



Meningitis can progress rapidly. One must seek medical care quickly when you experience the following symptoms:

- Sudden high fever
- Severe headache
- Neck stiffness
- Photophobia (increased sensitivity to light)
- Vomiting
- Confusion and convulsions
- In babies, there may be bulging of the anterior fontanelle (soft part of the head)

Although sometimes CSM can end up in fatality, most often it can be successfully treated with intravenous antibiotics. Early treatment can help prevent serious long-term consequences such as deafness, blindness, epileptic seizures and brain damage.

### **PREVENTION**

You can prevent CSM and avoid possible complications by practicing effective prevention. As preventive measures one need to:

- Avoid overcrowded places.
- Avoid direct contact with people coughing or sneezing.
- Allow adequate ventilation in our houses.
- Seek immediate medical help when you notice any of the symptoms of CSM.

**PLEASE STAY HEALTHY !!!**