

## **VIRAL MENINGITIS**

**Viral Meningitis** is a relatively common, but rarely serious, illness. It is an infection of the covering of the brain and spinal cord by a virus and is more common in late summer and early winter.

**SYMPTOMS:** With viral meningitis there is a sudden onset of fever, intense headache, and stiff neck. Other symptoms may be nausea, vomiting, behavior changes, irritability, and sluggishness. A rash may be present. The active illness lasts for less than ten days. In rare cases some symptoms may persist for a year or more, but complete recovery usually occurs.

**DIAGNOSIS:** Diagnosis is based on blood tests and the isolation of viruses from the throat, stool, cerebral spinal fluid, or blood.

**TRANSMISSION:** The time from exposure to occurrence of the disease is between two and 21 days. Transmission between individuals is possible from 7-10 days before the onset of symptoms until 7-10 days following onset of symptoms. The exact method of transmission depends on the specific virus.

**TREATMENT:** Although no specific treatment is available, the person with viral meningitis should be under a physician's care.

### **SCHOOL IMPLICATIONS:**

- **Exclude from school as long as a fever is present.**
- **Follow routine sanitary measures. Hand washing after using the restroom is critical because the virus may remain in the stool one to two months after the infection has ended.**
- **Do not share eating or drinking utensils (water bottles) or food.**