

Meningitis

Not common but serious and contagious

Meningitis is a swelling around the brain. It is a very serious, contagious illness, but if it is treated early most children make a full recovery.

Babies and toddlers are most vulnerable to meningitis as they cannot easily fight infection because their immune system is not yet fully developed. They can't tell you how they are feeling and can get a lot worse very quickly. Keep checking them.

You should always treat any case of suspected meningitis as an emergency.

Early signs may be like having a cold or flu. Children with meningitis can become seriously ill very fast, so make sure you can spot the signs. Your child may have a cluster of red or purple spots. Do the glass test. This rash can be harder to see on darker skin, so check for spots over your baby or child's whole body as it can start anywhere (check lightest areas first).

However, the rash is not always present - be aware of all the signs/symptoms.

The presence of fever and any other of the symptoms in the box to the right should be taken extremely seriously. Not all children will show all the signs.

GP says

If any of the signs below are present contact a doctor.

- Fever, cold hands and feet
- Floppy and unresponsive
- Drowsy and difficult to wake
- Spots/rash.
- Do the glass test
- Rapid breathing or grunting
- Fretful, dislikes being handled
- Unusual cry or moaning

The glass test

The glass test is a really useful way of spotting suspected meningitis. If your child has a cluster of red or purple spots, press the side of a clear drinking glass firmly against the rash.

If the spots are still visible through the glass. This is called a non-blanching rash - it does not fade. Contact a doctor immediately (e.g. your own surgery or call 111). **If you cannot get help straight away go to A&E.**

If the spots under the glass have virtually disappeared. It is unlikely to be meningitis but if you are still worried call 111, contact your GP or go to A&E.

Find out more from www.meningitisnow.org

1

My child is showing some of the signs of meningitis.

2

Have you tried the glass test?

3

If the spots do not fade under pressure contact a doctor (e.g. your own surgery or call 111). If you cannot get help straight away go to A&E.