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# Bacterial infection alcohol

It's no fun to wake up with your throat on fire and your head pounding. You may not care what's causing it -- you just want it to go away. But knowing the precise cause will help restore your good health, and knowing whether the culprit's a bacterium or a virus is essential. A bacterium -- more commonly seen written in its plural form, bacteria -- is a tiny, single-celled organism. Bacteria can exist on its own in the world, or inside of other living things: plants, animals, you, me. Not all bacteria are bad, though, and we have beneficial bacteria living inside our bodies every day. Friendly bacteria living in our intestinal tract, for instance, assist with digestion [source: Henry]. When an unwanted bacterium gets into the body, it quickly begins to divide and spread, causing an infection [source: Foster]. Common bacterial infections include strep throat, ear infections and urinary tract infections [source: Steckleberg]. Bacterial infections can usually be identified with a doctor's test -- for example, a throat culture can check for the presence of the streptococcus bacteria. If your test is positive for a bacterial infection, the doctor will usually treat it with antibiotics: medicine that specifically inhibits the growth of bacteria. Taking these according to instructions, along with some extra rest, will soon have you back on your feet. Viruses are also microscopic beings, but they behave differently from bacteria, and there's debate over whether they can be called living organisms. They can only flourish inside of a living thing, either plant, animal or bacteria. Many viruses can remain alive for a brief time outside of their host -- such as on a doorknob that an infected person just opened, or in the air right after someone sneezes. But in order to live and multiply, viruses need to settle inside a host. Once a virus gets in your system, think of it as a hostile takeover. Unwanted viral cells latch onto your healthy cells and convince them to stop what they're supposed to do, and make more of the virus instead [sources: Emilian, National Science Foundation]. Illnesses that result from a viral infection include the common cold or flu, Ebola and HIV [source: Steckleberg]. The biggest difference in viral or bacterial infections involves the treatment: A bacterial infection can be cleared up with a doctor-prescribed dose of antibiotics, while a virus does not respond to antibiotics. Antiviral medication can help ease the symptoms of a viral infection, but it's up to the body's strong immune system to fight off the cause of the problem -- the human body has response systems that kick into gear when an unwanted virus is detected, and is usually able to fight it off [source: Lehigh]. Unlike antibiotics, antiviral medications don't destroy their target but rather inhibit the growth of the virus and let your body finish it off. And antibiotics will be no help against a virus. Of course, a healthy immune system's something that aids in recovery of any type of infection, be it viral or bacterial. Symptom-easing medication and rest will make you feel better while you wait for your body to overcome the virus [source: CDC]. Focus on the good news: Once you've fought off a particular strain of a virus, you're usually immune to catching it again, at least for a significant period of time [source: Lehigh].

Viral or bacterial, it's never fun to have an infection -- but knowing the difference between the two can often be the best way to get better. Bacterial meningitis is serious. Some people with the infection die and death can occur in as little as a few hours. However, most people recover from bacterial meningitis. Those who do recover can have permanent disabilities, such as brain damage, hearing loss, and learning disabilities. Causes Several types of bacteria can cause meningitis. Leading causes in the United States include Streptococcus pneumoniae Group B Streptococcus Neisseria meningitidis Haemophilus influenzae Listeria monocytogenes Escherichia coli Mycobacterium tuberculosis, which causes tuberculosis or TB, is a less common cause of bacterial meningitis (called TB meningitis). Many of these bacteria can also be associated with another serious illness, sepsis. Sepsis is the body's extreme response to infection. It is a life-threatening medical emergency. Sepsis happens when an infection triggers a chain reaction throughout your body. Without timely treatment, sepsis can quickly lead to tissue damage, organ failure, and death. Some causes of bacterial meningitis are more likely to affect certain age groups: Newborns: Group B Streptococcus, S. pneumoniae, L. monocytogenes, E. coli Babies and young children: S. pneumoniae, N. meningitidis, H. influenzae, group B Streptococcus, M. tuberculosis Teens and young adults: N. meningitidis, S. pneumoniae Older adults: S. pneumoniae, N. meningitidis, H. influenzae, group B Streptococcus, L. monocytogenes Risk Factors Certain factors increase a person's risk for getting bacterial meningitis. These risk factors include: Age: Babies are at increased risk for bacterial meningitis compared to people in other age groups. However, people of any age can develop bacterial meningitis. See section above for which bacteria more commonly affect which age groups. Group setting: Infectious diseases tend to spread where large groups of people gather. For example, college campuses have reported outbreaks of meningococcal disease, caused by N. meningitidis. Certain medical conditions: Certain medical conditions, medications, and surgical procedures put people at increased risk for meningitis. For example, having an HIV infection or a cerebrospinal fluid leak, or not having a spleen can increase a person's risk for several types of bacterial meningitis. Working with meningitis-causing pathogens: Microbiologists routinely exposed to meningitis-causing bacteria are at increased risk for meningitis. Travel: Travelers may be at increased risk for meningococcal disease, caused by N. meningitidis, if they travel to certain places, such as: The meningitis belt in sub-Saharan Africa, particularly during the dry season Mecca during the annual Hajj and Umrah pilgrimage In many countries, TB is much more common than in the United States. Travelers should avoid close contact or prolonged time with known TB patients in crowded, enclosed environments (for example, clinics, hospitals, prisons, or homeless shelters). How It Spreads Certain germs that cause bacterial meningitis, such as L. monocytogenes, can spread through food. But most of these germs spread from one person to another. How people spread the germs often depends on the type of bacteria. It is also important to know that people can have these bacteria in or on their bodies without being sick. These people are "carriers." Most carriers never become sick, but can still spread the bacteria to others. Here are some of the most common examples of how people spread each type of bacteria to each other: Group B Streptococcus and E. coli: Mothers can pass these bacteria to their babies during birth. H. influenzae, M. tuberculosis, and S. pneumoniae: People spread these bacteria by coughing or sneezing while in close contact with others, who breathe in the bacteria. N. meningitidis: People spread these bacteria by sharing respiratory or throat secretions (saliva or spit). This typically occurs during close (coughing or kissing) or lengthy (living together) contact. E. coli: People can get these bacteria by eating food prepared by people who did not wash their hands well after using the toilet. People usually get sick from E. coli and L. monocytogenes by eating contaminated food. Signs and Symptoms Being pregnant increases a person's risk of getting a Listeria infection (L. monocytogenes). Pregnant people with a Listeria infection may not have any symptoms or may only have a fever and other flu-like symptoms, such as fatigue and muscle aches. However, infection during pregnancy can lead to miscarriage, stillbirth, premature delivery, or life-threatening infection of the newborn, including meningitis. Find out which foods are more likely to contain Listeria and steps you can take to protect your and your baby's health. Pregnant women can pass group B Streptococcus (group B strep) to their baby during delivery. Newborns infected with group B strep can develop meningitis or other serious infections soon after birth. Talk with your doctor or midwife about getting a group B test when you are 36 through 37 weeks pregnant. Doctors give antibiotics (during labor) to women who test positive in order to prevent infections in newborns. Meningitis symptoms include sudden onset of Fever Headache Stiff neck There are often other symptoms, such as Nausea Vomiting Photophobia (eyes being more sensitive to light) Altered mental status (confusion) Newborns and babies may not have, or it may be difficult to notice the classic symptoms listed above. Instead, babies may Be slow or inactive Be irritable Vomit Feed poorly Have a bulging fontanelle (the "soft spot" on a baby's head) Have abnormal reflexes If you think your baby or child has any of these symptoms, call the doctor right away. Typically, symptoms of bacterial meningitis develop within 3 to 7 days after exposure; note, this is not true for TB meningitis, which can develop much later after exposure to the bacteria. People with bacterial meningitis can have seizures, go into a coma, and even die. For this reason, anyone who thinks they may have meningitis should see a doctor as soon as possible. Diagnosis If a doctor suspects meningitis, they will collect samples of blood or cerebrospinal fluid (fluid near the spinal cord). A laboratory will test the samples to see what is causing the infection. Knowing the specific cause of meningitis helps doctors treat it. Treatment Doctors treat bacterial meningitis with a number of antibiotics. It is important to start treatment as soon as possible. Prevention Vaccination Vaccines are the most effective way to protect against certain types of bacterial meningitis. There are vaccines for 4 types of bacteria that can cause meningitis: Meningococcal vaccines help protect against N. meningitidis Pneumococcal vaccines help protect against S. pneumoniae Haemophilus influenzae serotype b (Hib) vaccines help protect against Hib Bacille Calmette-Guérin vaccine helps protect against tuberculosis disease, but is not widely used in the United States Make sure you and your child are vaccinated on schedule. Like with any vaccine, these vaccines do not work 100% of the time. The vaccines also do not protect against infections from all the types (strains) of each of these bacteria. For these reasons, there is still a chance vaccinated people can develop bacterial meningitis. Prophylaxis When someone has bacterial meningitis, a doctor may recommend antibiotics to help prevent people around the patient from getting sick. Doctors call this prophylaxis. CDC recommends prophylaxis for: Close contacts of someone with meningitis caused by N. meningitidis Household members of someone with a serious Hib infection when the household includes one or more people at increased risk of Hib based on age, vaccination status, and/or immunocompromising conditions Doctors or local health departments recommend who should get prophylaxis. Healthy Pregnancy Practices Pregnant women should talk to their doctor or midwife about getting tested for group B Streptococcus. Women receive the test when they are 36 through 37 weeks pregnant. Doctors give antibiotics (during labor) to women who test positive in order to prevent passing group B strep to their newborns. Pregnant women can also reduce their risk of meningitis caused by L. monocytogenes. Women should avoid certain foods during pregnancy and safely prepare others. Healthy Habits You can also help protect yourself and others from bacterial meningitis and other health problems by maintaining healthy habits: Don't smoke and avoid cigarette smoke as much as possible Get plenty of rest Avoid close contact with people who are sick Wash your hands often with soap and water (use hand sanitizer if soap and water aren't available) Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze (use your upper sleeve or elbow if a tissue isn't available) These healthy habits are especially important for people at increased risk for disease, including: Young babies Older adults People with weak immune systems People without a spleen or a spleen that doesn't work the way it should Top of Page bacterial infection alcohol dependence. can you drink alcohol with a bacterial infection. rubbing alcohol and bacterial infection. can drinking alcohol kill bacterial infection. does alcohol kill bacterial infection. drinking alcohol with bacterial infection. does alcohol affect bacterial infection. can alcohol cure a bacterial infection

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