



# INFECTIOUS DISEASES

## Method of infection

Infectious diseases are contagious and spread from person to person in numerous ways - via coughing, sneezing, direct contact, or contact with body fluids i.e. vomit, urine, faeces, blood or semen.

## Incubation period

This is the period of time from when the infection first invades the body and the time of the onset of symptoms.

## Quarantine period

The time for which an infected person is capable of transferring that infection to other people.

## Immunisation

Means readying the body for future potential infections. This can be done in differing ways:

- Use a live but modified infectious agent to induce a very mild infection,  
eg: Measles or Polio
- Inject killed micro-organisms or their products  
eg: Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus

Immunisation can be achieved either by oral or intramuscular injection.

# CHICKEN POX



## Definition

A highly infectious disease caused by a Herpes Virus

## Cause

Varicella Zoster Virus

## Contact method

Droplet /airborne, vesicle in skin fluid

## Infectious period

I - 5 Days prior to rash appearing and until all spots have disappeared

## Incubation period

II - 18 Days

## Signs & symptoms

- Fever
- Headaches
- Discomfort
- After 24 Hours, rash appears on torso and face in four stages:
  - i - small dark red spots
  - ii - raised lump
  - iii - itchy blister
  - iv - dry crust/scab which will drop off after about 12 days

## Management

- \* Bed rest
- \* Calamine Lotion to rash / blisters to relieve itching

## Immunisation

Nil

## Complications

This virus may lie dormant for many years and flare up in later life as SHINGLES (Herpes Zoster).

# COMMON COLD (CORYZA)

## Definition

A catarrhal inflammation of the mucous membrane in the nose.

## Cause

Rhinovirus and Coronavirus

## Contact method

Droplet / Airborne

## Infectious period

While symptoms persist

## Recognition

- High fever
- Lethargy
- Runny nose
- Coughing & sneezing
- Mucous discharge

## Management

- \* Soluble Aspirin / Paracetamol - to help reduce fever
- \* Decongestant - to dry up mucosa

## Immunisation

Nil

## Complications

- \* Wheeze
- \* Ear infection

# 'FLU' (INFLUENZA)

## Definition

A highly contagious viral infection that affects the respiratory system.

## Cause

Viruses, Influenza A & B

## Contact method

Droplet / airborne

## Infectious period

While symptoms persist

## Incubation period

1 - 4 Days

## Recognition

- Headache
- Fever & shivering
- Appetite loss
- Generalised aches & pains
- Lethargy
- Persistent cough & dry sore throat
- Sore eyes

## Management

- \* Rest
- \* Aspirin / Paracetamol
- \* May need antibiotics

## Complications

Secondary lung infections

## Immunisation

Flu vaccine is available. At time of writing (2011), the The National Immunisation Program Schedule provides free influenza vaccine for:

- all people aged 65 years and older
- pregnant women
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and older
- everyone aged from six months and over with medical conditions that put them at risk of complications from influenza infection



Photo source:  
<http://drdaveunleashed.wordpress.com>

# GLANDULAR FEVER (MONONUCLEOSIS)

## Definition

An infective viral disease which affects adolescents and young adults, but can occur at any age in childhood.

## Cause

Believed to be caused by the Epstein - Barr Virus

## Infective period

Not highly infectious

## Incubation period

Up to several weeks

## Recognition

- Fever & headache
- Sore throat
- Tenderness & swelling to lymph nodes
- Loss of appetite
- Medical examination may reveal enlarged spleen

## Management

- \* Aspirin / Paracetamol
- \* Bed rest

## Complications

Glandular Fever can sometimes last for many weeks

# MENINGITIS

## Definition

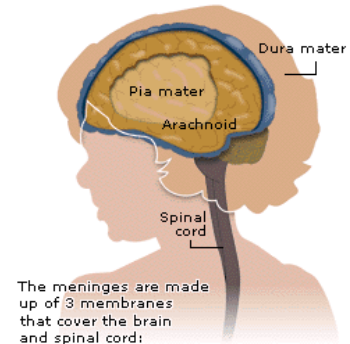
Inflammation of nerve endings of the Brain (Meninges) due to an infection caused by either a virus or bacteria.

## Contact method

Droplet / airborne

## Recognition

- Severe headache
- Fever
- Loss of appetite
- Neck muscle rigidity
- Photophobia (intolerance to light)
- Vomiting & delirium (in severe cases)



*Picture source:*  
<http://www.diseasepictures.org/meningitis-pictures.html>

## Management of Bacterial Meningitis

- \* Antibiotics
- \* Sulphonamides

## Management of Viral Meningitis

- \* Does not respond well to drugs
- \* Bed rest in darkened quiet room

## Immunisation

For those with a Pneumococcus infection - Pneumococcal Vaccine

# SCARLET FEVER

## Definition

A highly contagious childhood disease

## Cause

Bacteria - 'Streptococcus'

## Contact method

- \* Droplet / airborne
- \* Contaminated milk
- \* Infected wound

## Incubation period

2 - 4 days post exposure

## Recognition

- Headache & fever
- Dry sore throat
- General malaise
- Scarlet rash that spreads from armpits and groin to neck, chest and back
- Rash does not spread to face. Rash is not itchy.
- Bright red tongue

## Management

- \* Aspirin / Paracetamol
- \* Antibiotics

## Complications

- \* Kidney infection
- \* Ear infection
- \* Swelling of glands in neck
- \* Rheumatic Fever

## Imunisation

Nil

# WHOOPING COUGH (PERTUSSIS)

## Definition

A severe contagious condition affecting children, due to an infection of the mucous membranes that line the airway.

## Cause

Bacteria - Haemophilus Pertussis

## Contact method

Droplet / airborne

## Infectious period

While symptoms persist, unless treated by antibiotics

## Incubation period

1 - 2 weeks

## Recognition

### 1. Symptoms develop over 1-2 weeks

- \* Mild fever
- \* Hoarse voice
- \* Catarrh
- \* Cough
- \* Loss of appetite

### 2. Then cough progresses to 'paroxysmal' cough

- \* Short *barking* cough followed by *whoop* which is due to the narrowing of the airways
- \* Productive cough
- \* Vomiting at end of paroxysm
- \* Congested face, may become purple, even blue if attack is severe
- \* Protruding tongue
- \* Staring, watery eyes

**(STATE COULD LAST UP TO 3 MONTHS)**



## **Whooping Cough (continued)**

### **Management**

- \* Bed rest
- \* Plenty of fluids
- \* Aspirin / Paracetamol
- \* Plenty of reassurance during coughing bout
- \* Back slaps post coughing to help release sticky mucous
- \* In severe cases hospitalisation may be necessary

### **Complications**

- \* Pneumonia
- \* Haemorrhage ie: in conjunctiva of eye
- \* Dehydration
- \* Weight loss

### **Immunisation**

Triple Antigen

# RUBELLA - GERMAN MEASLES

## Definition

A severe contagious Viral Infection, mainly in children

## Cause

Rubella Virus

## Contact method

Droplet / airborne

## Infectious period

A few days prior to rash, several days after rash appears.

## Incubation period

2 - 3 weeks

## Recognition

- Fever & headache
- Sore throat
- Non itchy, even rash, - spreads from face downwards, disappears within seven days
- Enlarged lymph glands behind ears and back of neck

## Management

- \* Aspirin / Paracetamol
- \* Keep patient away from pregnant women who are less than 4 months pregnant.

## Complications

None for the patient. Birth defects if mother contracts Rubella during the first 4 months of pregnancy.

## Immunisation

Rubella Vaccine

# MEASLES

## Cause

Measles Virus

## Contact method

Droplet / airborne

## Infectious period

Five days prior, five days after rash

## Incubation period

10 - 12 days from contact to onset of symptoms

14 days to onset of rash

## Recognition

- Fever
- Hyperpyrexia
- Runny nose
- Non productive cough

## Management

An uncomplicated case of measles usually lasts about 14 days and most people make a full recovery. In the meantime, treatment options may include:

- Bed rest
- Plenty of fluids
- Paracetamol to reduce pain and fever
- Isolation to reduce the risk of transmission.

Occasionally the case of measles can be more complicated, which requires hospitalization.

# Measles (Continued)

## Complications

- **Otitis media** – inflammation of the middle ear.
- **Diarrhoea and vomiting** – may cause further complications such as dehydration.
- **Respiratory infections** – such as bronchitis, croup or laryngitis.
- **Pneumonia** – a type of lung inflammation that causes about 60 per cent of measles deaths.
- **Pregnancy problems** – if a pregnant woman contracts measles, she risks miscarriage or premature labour

## Immunisation

The measles vaccine in Australia is combined with mumps and rubella (German measles) vaccines and is commonly known as MMR (after each disease). In Victoria, this vaccine is available free to:

- **Young children** – at 12 months of age
- **Children** – at four years of age
- **Children from 13 months to four years of age (inclusive)** – as a ‘catch-up’ immunisation, if they have not been fully vaccinated.

Immunisation is also recommended for adults born during or since 1966 – unless you have evidence of having received two doses of MMR.