

Aseptic Meningitis Cases in Clark County

General Aseptic Meningitis Information

Background

Meningitis is an illness of tissue inflammation that cover the brain and spinal cord. The most common type is viral meningitis, which is caused by one of several types of viruses; however, it is often less severe than bacterial meningitis and most people recover without treatment. If symptoms of meningitis are suspected, seek medical care right away as some types of meningitis can be very serious and only a doctor can determine if the disease is present, the type of meningitis, and the best treatment.

Transmission & Risk

The viruses that cause viral meningitis are contagious; although, fewer than 1 of every 1000 persons infected develops meningitis. Enteroviruses are very common during summer and early fall and many people are exposed to them, but most infected persons either have no symptoms or develop only an upper respiratory infection or rash with low grade fever. There is a moderate chance of becoming infected, but a small chance of developing meningitis.

The most common cause of viral meningitis are enteroviruses that spread through direct contact with respiratory secretions. This happens by shaking hands with an infected person, touching something they might have handled then rubbing your own nose, mouth, or eyes. There is a chance for the virus to be spread in stool; however, this is primarily common in small children who are not yet toilet trained or to an adult changing the diapers of an infected infant. The incubation period is between 3-7 days from time of infection to symptoms are developed. The virus can be spread to someone about 3 days after infection and 10 days after symptoms are developed.

Symptoms & Complications

The common symptoms of meningitis are fever, severe headache, stiff neck, photophobia, drowsiness or trouble waking up from sleep, nausea and vomiting; however, symptoms are not the same for everyone. In babies, it is more difficult to identify symptoms. Those can include fever, irritability, difficulty awakening the baby, refusal to eat, or lack of energy.

Viral meningitis is serious, but rarely fatal in persons with healthy immune systems. Babies under 1 month old and people with weakened immune systems are more likely to have severe illness. Bacterial meningitis is very serious with similar symptoms to viral meningitis. It is important to seek medical care if you suspect you or your child has meningitis.

Testing, Diagnosis, Treatment

Viral meningitis is mainly diagnosed by laboratory tests of spinal fluid obtained from a spinal tap. There is no specific treatment, and most people will recover within 7 to 10 days, in most cases. Doctors will often recommend bed rest, plenty of fluids and medications to relieve the symptoms. Those with

meningitis caused by herpesvirus or influenza will need antiviral medicine. Hospitalization may be necessary for those with weakened immune systems or babies.

More information can be found here: <https://odh.ohio.gov/know-our-programs/infectious-disease-control-manual/section3/section-3-meningitis-aseptic>

Clark County Related Discussion

Figure 1 shows the cases in Clark County between 2017 and 2021. There highest number of cases was reported in 2019. The total cases are either probable or confirmed, with a majority being confirmed. Table 1 shows the breakdown of case classification from 2017 to 2021. A probable case is defined as a clinically compatible case that is diagnosed by a physician as aseptic meningitis with no laboratory test performed.

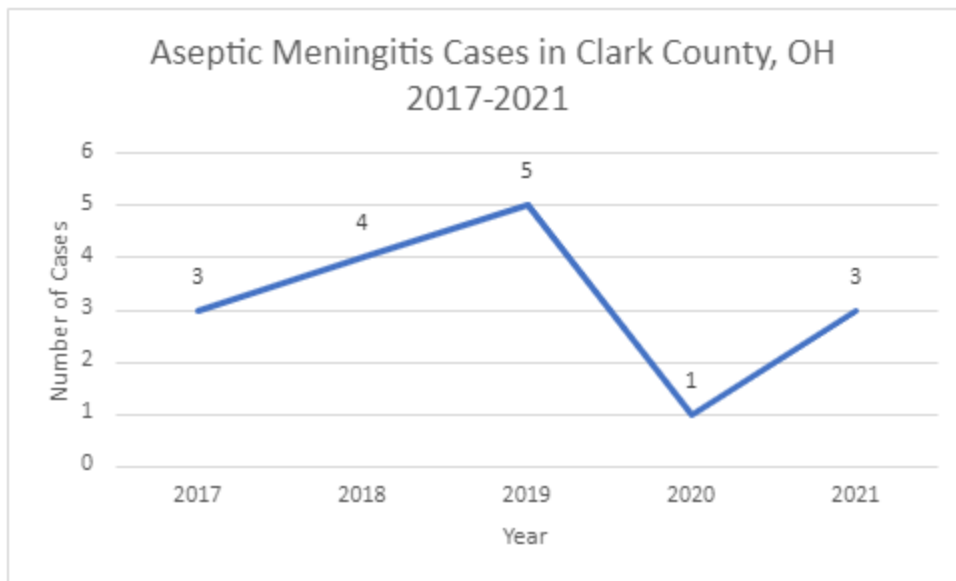


Figure 1 Aseptic Meningitis cases in Clark County, 2017-2021

	Suspected Total	Probable Total	Confirmed Total
2017	0	0	3
2018	0	1	3
2019	0	1	4
2020	0	0	1
2021	0	2	1

Table 1 Case classification by year