Common Causes of Meningitis: Children (6 Months - 6 Years)

The most common causes of meningitis in the age group of 6 months of age to 6 years of age are comprised of Enteroviruses, Neisseria meningitidis, Haemophilus influenzea type B, and Streptococcus pneumoniae. Enterovirus is the most common cause of viral meningitis, and is spread primarily via the fecal-oral route, but can also be spready through inhalation. The three bacterial causes (N. meningitidis, H. influenzae type B, S. pneumoniae) are seen more often in lower socioeconomic areas or third-world countries, where vaccinations may be less common, and the amount of sick contacts may be higher.



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Enteroviruses

Intestine-viruses

Enterovirus is the most common cause of viral meningitis, as 75-85% of viral meningitis cases are due to this organism. This is seen more often in this age group primarily because of enterovirus' route of transmission, which is fecal-oral. Children in close contact with each other, who have poor hygiene, may lead to increased transmission of enterovirus. A small percentage of cases are also spread via the inhalation route.

Neisseria meningitidis

Knives Men-in-tights

Neisseria meningitidis is spread through the aerosol route between children and has high infectivity. Risk factors for contracting this bacterial infection include preceding illnesses, along with being in close contacts with others, e.g. school or daycare.

Haemophilus influenzae Type B

(B) Bee He-man In-flute

H. influenzae type B is another common bacterial cause of meningitis. Due to widespread introduction of vaccinations against this organism, most cases occur in those who are unvaccinated, and in rural or third-world areas where endemic disease is prevalent, leading to a higher exposure in children.

Streptococcus pneumoniae

Stripper Nude-Mona

Due to widespread introduction of vaccinations against this organism, most cases occur in those who are unvaccinated, and in rural or third-world areas where endemic disease is prevalent, leading to a higher exposure in children. Children who are immunocompromised or who have had another recent infection may be more susceptible to S. pneumoniae. It is spread via inhalation, so close quarters (schools) increase the risk of transmission.

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