MEDICINENET GUIDE

INFECTIOUS DISEASES IN THE NEWS

MedicineNet.com
We Bring Doctors’ Knowledge to You
Notice To Readers

This Guide is intended to provide helpful information. The Guide is not a substitute for professional medical advice, care, diagnosis or treatment, and is not designed to promote or endorse any medical practice, program or agenda or any medical tests, products, treatment or procedures. The Guide may not be completely accurate and does not contain information about all diseases, nor does it contain all information that may be relevant to a particular medical or health condition. MedicineNet shall not be responsible or liable for any loss or damage of any sort incurred as the result of the presence of, any dealings with, or any participation in promotions of advertisers found in the Guide.

If you have or suspect that you have a medical problem, you should contact your professional healthcare provider. You should not under any circumstances disregard any professional medical advice or delay in seeking such advice in reliance on any information provided in the Guide. Your reliance on any information contained in the Guide is solely at your own risk. Information provided in the Guide, including information regarding dietary supplements, has not been evaluated or approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration or any other government agency. You should consult your healthcare provider before beginning any course of dietary supplementation or treatment.

THIS GUIDE IS BEING PROVIDED “AS IS,” WITHOUT ANY IMPLIED OR EXPRESS WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, INCLUDING, WITHOUT LIMITATION, THE IMPLIED WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE AND NON-INFRINGEMENT.
INFECTION DISEASES IN THE NEWS

CONTENTS

Listeriosis (Listeria monocytogenes Infection) .......................................................... 3
  Listeriosis (Listeria monocytogenes infection) facts .................................................. 3
  What are listeriosis symptoms and signs? ...................................................................... 3

Hantavirus pulmonary syndrome (HPS) facts ............................................................ 5
  Hantavirus pulmonary syndrome (HPS) facts .......................................................... 5
  What is hantavirus pulmonary syndrome (HPS), and what are hantavirus pulmonary syndrome symptoms and signs? ................................................................. 5

West Nile Virus ............................................................................................................. 7
  West Nile virus facts .................................................................................................. 7
  What are West Nile virus symptoms and signs? ......................................................... 7

Food Poisoning .............................................................................................................. 8
  Food poisoning facts ................................................................................................. 8
  What are the signs and symptoms of food poisoning? .............................................. 8

The WebMD Network .................................................................................................. 9
  WebMD – Better information. Better health ............................................................... 9
LISTERIOSIS (LISTERIA MONOCYTOGENES INFECTION)

Listeriosis (Listeria monocytogenes infection) facts

- Listeriosis is a disease caused by a gram-positive bacterium named Listeria that can penetrate and replicate inside human cells.
- Most people who are infected have few or no symptoms; when symptoms are present, they usually consist of fever, muscle aches, nausea, or diarrhea. Some people may develop more severe symptoms such as meningitis, mental changes, brain abscesses, or death.
- Although most people have self-limited disease, people with risk factors such as an altered or depressed immune response (for example, pregnant females and their fetus or newborn, cancer patients, AIDS patients) are at higher risk for getting the disease and some are more likely to have more severe disease.
- Listeriosis is usually diagnosed by discovering that a person was associated with an outbreak of Listeria-contaminated food or fluid or identified as a person associated with the source of a known listeriosis outbreak. Definitive diagnosis is done when Listeria bacteria are isolated from the patient’s blood, cerebrospinal fluid, or other body fluid.
- Most normal people spontaneously clear the infection and require no treatment. In contrast, people with risk factors should be treated quickly with IV antibiotics.
- People are exposed to Listeria bacteria if they ingest contaminated food or fluid. Foods that are not cooked or fluids that are not treated or pasteurized are frequently the sources of infection. Pregnant females can transmit Listeria organisms to their fetus or to their newborn.
- Cooking foods, treating or pasteurizing fluids, and avoiding food and fluids that may be contaminated with animal or human waste may prevent infection.
- The prognosis for most Listeria infections is excellent even if people have consumed contaminated foods or fluid; however, the prognosis rapidly declines in patients with risk factors if they are not quickly diagnosed and treated.
- U.S. government agencies are responsible for maintaining safe foods and fluids for the U.S. population and may enforce regulations to ensure contaminated products are reported, removed, recalled, and production and sales stopped until processing meets acceptable standards of safety.

What are listeriosis symptoms and signs?

Fever, muscle aches, and, occasionally, nausea or diarrhea (or both) are the usual symptoms associated with listeriosis. These symptoms usually last up to one week and spontaneously resolve. However, in some people, the organisms can spread to the brain. The symptoms of meningitis (stiff neck, headache, and fever), altered mental status (confusion, reduced mental activity), balance problems, and seizures develop in brain infections. Brain abscesses may also occur and cause similar symptoms. The incubation period between exposure and symptoms is quite variable and may extend up to two months according to some investigators.

Pregnant women who are otherwise healthy usually have only minor symptoms. However, Listeria organisms in pregnant females often cause miscarriage, stillbirth, premature birth, or cause infection and, potentially, death of the newborn. About 30% of all listeriosis infections reported in the U.S. occur in pregnant females.

Occasionally, localized skin infections may occur, especially in people who handle animals that are infected with Listeria. These skin infections rarely lead to further complications such as brain infection.
According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), mortality (death) rates can be in the range off about 20%.

See the entire article:
http://www.medicinenet.com/listeria/article.htm
HANTAVIRUS PULMONARY SYNDROME (HPS) FACTS

Hantavirus pulmonary syndrome (HPS) facts

- Hantaviruses are RNA viruses that are transmitted to human by rodents.
- Hantavirus pulmonary syndrome (HPS) is a disease in which in the late stage of infection with a hantavirus subtype, patients experience lung congestion, fluid accumulation in the lungs, and shortness of breath. Death occurs in about 38% of patients. Early symptoms (fatigue, fever, muscle aches) are nonspecific.
- Hantavirus was first identified in an outbreak in 1993 in the "Four Corners" area of the southwestern U.S. and found to be transmitted to humans by rodent urine, feces, saliva, and by airborne particles containing these items. The 2012 outbreak at Yosemite National Park was due to hantavirus transfer to humans by deer mice. Human-to-human transmission of hantavirus in the Americas has not been documented.
- HPS is caused by hantaviruses that cause lung capillaries to leak fluid into the lung tissue.
- HPS is usually diagnosed presumptively by the patient's lung symptoms or the patient's association with rodents, or the patient's probable contact with rodent-contaminated airborne dust; chest X-rays provide additional evidence, but definitive diagnosis is usually done at a specialized lab or the CDC.
- There is no specific treatment of HPS; patients are usually treated in an intensive-care facility and often require respiratory support (intubation).
- Risk factors are any association with rodents and their airborne body excretions.
- Complications of HPS are death in about 38% of patients; if the HPS patient survives, there are usually no long-term complications.
- For patients who survive HPS, the prognosis is very good without complications.
- Prevention of HPS centers on avoidance of rodent contamination; there is no vaccine available to prevent hantavirus infection or HPS.

What is hantavirus pulmonary syndrome (HPS), and what are hantavirus pulmonary syndrome symptoms and signs?

HPS is a disease caused by hantavirus that results in human lungs filling with fluid (pulmonary edema) and causing death in about 38% of all infected patients. The symptoms and signs of HPS are usually grouped into early and late stages. Early HPS signs and symptoms begin about one to five weeks after the person contacts hantavirus associated with rodent urine, feces, or saliva. The early symptoms last about four to 10 days and include the following:

- Fatigue
- Fever
- Muscle aches (especially large muscles in the legs, back, and hips)

Almost every infected person develops these symptoms. Other symptoms that may occur in about half of infected patients include abdominal pain (with nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea), headaches, chills, and dizziness.
Late symptoms of HPS symptoms occur about four to 10 days after the early symptoms and include coughing, chest pain, and shortness of breath that can become severe.

See the entire article:
http://www.medicinenet.com/hantavirus_pulmonary_syndrome/article.htm
WEST NILE VIRUS

West Nile virus facts

- West Nile is a virus capable of causing disease in humans.
- Symptoms and signs include fever, headache, body aches, skin rash, and swollen lymph glands.
- Severe symptoms may include stiff neck, sleepiness, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, and paralysis.
- Most cases of West Nile virus are mild and go unreported.
- A key feature of neuroinvasive West Nile virus disease is encephalitis, an inflammation of the brain.
- The virus is carried from infected birds to people by mosquitoes.
- There is no evidence for transmission from person to person.
- West Nile virus first gained attention in the U.S. in 1999 after an outbreak in New York City. Since then, outbreaks have occurred in 47 states.
- Use of insect repellents may help reduce the risk of becoming infected with the West Nile virus.

What are West Nile virus symptoms and signs?

Mild infections are common with the West Nile virus. Symptoms of a mild infection include fever, headache, and body aches, which are often accompanied by a skin rash and swollen lymph nodes.

More severe infections are less common and are marked by headache, high fever, neck stiffness, stupor (sleepiness), disorientation, coma, tremors, occasional convulsions, paralysis, and rarely death. West Nile virus meningitis or encephalitis may result in a prolonged recuperation and rehabilitation period, especially in the elderly.

West Nile virus can have some long-term effects after severe illnesses. Memory loss, depression, irritability, and confusion are the most prevalent residual effects.

Patients may also experience difficulty walking, muscle weakness, fatigue, and insomnia.

Symptoms in children are basically the same as symptoms in adults. Children may complain of headache, may have a fever, and may become lethargic.

Since most cases of West Nile virus infection are mild, the prognosis for recovery is generally good. In severe cases, death-rate statistics range from 3%-15% and are highest in the elderly.

See the entire article:
http://www.medicinenet.com/west_nile_encephalitis/article.htm
FOOD POISONING

Food poisoning facts

- Food poisoning is a common infection that affects millions of people in the United States each year.
- Most commonly, patients complain of vomiting, diarrhea, and crampy abdominal pain.
- People should seek medical care if they have an associated fever, blood in their stool, signs and symptoms of dehydration, or if their symptoms do not resolve after a couple of days.
- Treatment focuses on keeping the patient well hydrated.
- Most cases of food poisoning resolve on their own.
- Prevention is key and depends upon keeping food preparation areas clean, good hand washing, and cooking foods thoroughly.

What are the signs and symptoms of food poisoning?

Food poisoning most commonly causes:

- abdominal cramps,
- vomiting and
- diarrhea.

This can cause significant amounts of fluid loss and with nausea and vomiting, it may be difficult to replace that fluid, leading to dehydration. In developing countries where infectious epidemics cause diarrheal illnesses, thousands of people die because of dehydration.

As noted in the section above, other organ systems may be infected and affected by food poisoning. Symptoms will depend upon what organ system is involved (for example, encephalopathy due to brain infection).

See the entire article:
http://www.medicinenet.com/food_poisoning/article.htm