ADULTS GET IT TOO
Meningitis – adults get it too

Many people think that meningitis only affects children, yet it can affect anyone, of any age, at any time.

The Meningitis Trust exists to remove the threat of meningitis and reduce its impact on people everywhere – children and adults. As an adult, you need to be aware of the very real threat meningitis poses to yourself.

Meningitis and adults – what you need to know

Meningitis is inflammation of the meninges, the lining surrounding the brain; it can be caused by bacteria, viruses and fungi. The most common cause of bacterial meningitis is meningococcal, this bacteria can also cause septicaemia (blood poisoning).

Bacterial meningitis can kill, and is caused predominantly by meningococcal and pneumococcal bacteria, less common causes include TB and listeria.

Viral meningitis is rarely fatal, but can be very debilitating; it often goes undetected and can have long lasting after effects. Most of the cases of viral meningitis we hear about are in adults.

Most adults (over age of 25) will not have had a meningitis vaccine.

Many adults who became sick do not seek immediate medical attention, they go to bed, take a couple of paracetemol and hope they'll feel better in the morning. But meningitis can kill within hours. By learning to recognise the symptoms you could save your life, or the life of a loved one.

Be vigilant, be safe

- Meningitis and meningococcal septicaemia can present themselves in a similar way to common illnesses such as flu, sinusitis and gastro-enteritis in the early stages.
The difference being that meningitis causes rapid deterioration. Keep an eye on yourself, you could become ill very quickly.
If you feel unwell tell somebody, ask them to check on you every few hours. If you live alone, or are away on business, phone somebody and ask them to stay in touch.

- It can kill within hours, so every second counts. It is vital that if you think you or someone you know has meningitis/meningococcal septicaemia you seek immediate medical help. If you can't see a doctor, don't be afraid to go straight to A&E.
- Stay alert to the signs: Vomiting, fever, severe headache, stiff neck, aversion to light (dislike of bright lights), drowsiness, joint pain, fitting.
- Trust your instincts. These symptoms may not appear at the same time or in any particular order. In some cases, where septicaemia (blood poisoning) has occurred a rash may appear. The "glass test" can be used to see if a rash might be septicaemic. If you press the side of a clear drinking glass firmly onto the spots or bruises, they will not fade.

Adults get it too - real life account

"I will always remember the first symptoms - a sickening dull ache between my shoulder blades and my skin starting to feel sore as it does when you get a temperature. I live on my own, so there was no one to spot that I was seriously ill. It didn't cross my mind that evening to call the doctor and I don't remember much of the following weekend. When I didn't go into work on the Monday morning, my sister came round to my house to find out how I was. One of my few vivid memories of that morning is the spluttering sound of the police kicking in my back door. Five days later I woke up in intensive care." Gill
JUST AFFECT KIDS.
Meningitis Trust

The Meningitis Trust is the only meningitis charity offering emotional and practical support to people affected by meningitis through a range of professional services including Counselling, Home Visiting, Financial Grants, One to One Contacts, a nurse-led 24-Hour Helpline.

The Meningitis Trust also works with public and professionals through a range of innovative educational services and products to ensure that meningitis is recognised and treated promptly.

The Meningitis Trust offers support for life to people whose lives have been devastated by the disease.

We also fund life-saving medical research to develop new vaccines and treatments for meningitis, and to understand more about after effects and their impact on families and communities.

24 HOUR HELPLINE
0845 6000 800

www.meningitis-trust.org