



Fact File: Meningitis

Meningitis is inflammation of the protective membranes covering the brain and spinal cord. It may develop most prominently in response to bacteria and viruses, but also physical injury, cancer or certain drugs. It is a serious condition. The most common form is treated with antibiotics and requires close observation. A severe headache is the most common symptom followed by neck stiffness.

Fact File: Tick Fever

Tick Bite Fever is a bacterial infection transmitted by ticks. Symptoms may include fever, headache, malaise and a skin rash. Being bitten by ticks usually occurs during outdoor activities in rural or wilderness areas. The symptoms can vary considerably in severity, but can be treated with antibiotics.



Fact File: Malaria

In Africa, a child dies from malaria every thirty seconds. Malaria is an infectious disease that kills between one and three million people every year. Most of these deaths occur with young children in Sub-Saharan Africa.

When a mosquito bites, a small amount of blood is taken in which contains microscopic malaria parasites. These grow and mature in the mosquito's gut for a week or more, then travel to the salivary glands. When the mosquito next takes a blood meal, these parasites mix with the saliva and are injected into the bite.

The parasites grow and multiply in the liver and it can take as little as eight days or as long as several months before the parasites enter the red blood cells. After they mature, the infected red blood cells rupture, freeing the parasites to attack other red blood cells. Toxins released when the red cells burst cause the typical fever, chills, and flu-like malaria symptoms.

Malaria can be reduced by preventing mosquito bites with mosquito nets and insect repellents. Spraying insecticides inside houses and draining standing water where mosquitoes lay their eggs are two ways of controlling the disease.

No vaccine is currently available; preventative drugs must be taken continuously to reduce the risk of infection but these are often too expensive for people living in the third world. Malarial infections are treated through the use of drugs, such as quinine. However, drug resistance is increasingly common.