

New Jersey Department of Health
Communicable Disease Service

Sample Notification Letter- Viral Meningitis

Please consult with the LHD and/or NJDOH prior to distribution
Microsoft® Word version available upon request

[School/company letterhead]

Dear *[Parent, Teacher, School Administrator, Community Resident, etc]*:

We have been notified by the _____ Department of Health that one of our *[students/employees]* has been diagnosed with viral meningitis. While this can be upsetting, **the chance of *[your child/you]* also becoming ill with this disease is very small.** Viral meningitis is not the same as bacterial meningitis. People who get viral meningitis usually recover completely with rest and fever-reducing medicine. The following information will help you understand viral meningitis:

- Viral meningitis can occur throughout the year but is most common in the summer and fall. People of any age can get viral meningitis, but it is more frequent in children.
- About 90% of viral meningitis cases are due to common stomach viruses called non-polio enteroviruses. Enteroviruses are passed from person-to-person through stool or saliva (spit), but most people who come in contact with enteroviruses do not develop an infection. This is because their immune system fights the virus successfully.
- Getting infected with one of the germs that can cause viral meningitis does not automatically mean a person will get meningitis. In most cases, the germ will simply cause a cold, upset stomach, or diarrhea.
- Antibiotics are not effective against viruses.
- There is no specific prevention for viral meningitis. However, as a general rule, you can help prevent the spread of infectious diseases by washing hands frequently, covering nose and mouth with tissues when coughing or sneezing, not going to school or work while sick, and not sharing eating utensils, toothbrushes, cups, drinking glasses, or water bottles.
- For more information, please visit <https://www.cdc.gov/meningitis/viral.html>

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact your doctor or the _____ Department of Health at _____ *[phone#]* _____. Please do not call *[school/business]* for an update on the *[student's/employee's]* condition. *[School administrators/employee health service]* will work closely with public health officials to keep you informed of the situation.

Sincerely,

[Health Officer - School Administrator - Nurse]