



University Hospital Galway

EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT GalwayEM.ie

Bacterial Meningitis

(<https://galwayem.ie/guidelines/medical-emergencies/bacterial-meningitis>)

Category

Medical Emergencies (<https://galwayem.ie/guidelines/medical-emergencies>)

Image

(https://galwayem.ie/home/galwayem_live/galwayem/web/sites/default/files/images/meningitis_2.jpg)

Additional Information* ([#_ftn1](#))

^a Warning Signs

The following warn of impending worsening shock, respiratory failure or raised intracranial pressure and require urgent senior review and intervention
(See algorithm)

- Rapidly progressive rash
- Poor peripheral perfusion CRT > 4secs, oliguria and systolic BP < 90

(hypotension often a late stage)

- RR < 8 or > 30
- Pulse Rate < 40 or > 140
- Acidosis; pH < 7.3 or BE < -5
- WBC < 4
- Marked depressed conscious level (GCS < 12) or a fluctuating conscious level (fall in GCS > 2)
- Focal neurology
- Persistent seizures
- Bradycardia and hypertension
- Papilloedema

^b CT Scan and Meningitis

- This investigation should only be used when appropriate:
- A normal CT scan does not exclude raised intracranial pressure.
- If there are no clinical contraindications to LP a CT scan is not necessary beforehand.
- Subsequently a CT scan may be useful in identifying dural defects predisposing to meningitis.

^c Appropriate antibiotics for bacterial meningitis

- Review with microbiology.
- Amoxicillin 2g IV 4 hrly should be added for individual > 50 yrs to cover listeria (co-trimoxazole 10mg/kg IV if penicillin hypersensitive)
- Amend antibiotics on the basis of microbiology results.
- Uncertain Hx of allergy (i.e. more than rash) or severe allergy. Chloramphenicol 25mg/kg IV and discuss with microbiology dept.

^d Corticosteroids in adult meningitis

- Dexamethasone 0.15 mg/kg IV started with or just before the first dose of antibiotics, particularly where pneumococcal meningitis is suspected.

- Do not give unless you are confident you are using the correct antimicrobials.
- Stop the dexamethasone if non-bacterial cause is identified.

^e **Lumbar puncture**

If there will be delay before lumbar punctures start antibiotics immediately once blood cultures have been taken and prior to lumbar puncture.

Encephalitis Acyclovir 10mg/kg

* (#_ftnref1) <http://www.meningitis.org/health-professionals/hospital-protocols-adults>
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