

MENINGITIS AND ENCEPHALITIS – ACUTE MANAGEMENT PRACTICE GUIDELINE[®]

DOCUMENT SUMMARY/KEY POINTS

Paediatric Improvement Collaborative Guideline

Meningitis and Encephalitis

https://www.rch.org.au/clinicalguide/guideline_index/Meningitis_encephalitis/

- Treat with antibiotics, steroids (where indicated) and careful fluid management
- Dosing and medications for meningitis/encephalitis are not as per the PIC guideline. Staff are to follow local SCHN antibiotic guidelines for treatment:
 - [Empiric Antibiotic Guidelines - CHW](#)
 - [CHW - Empiric Antibiotic "Swing card" \(Current\)](#)
 - [Empiric Antibiotic Guidelines - SCH](#)
 - **At CHW:** Also refer to [The Children's Hospital at Westmead Handbook](#)
- Symptoms at presentation can be non-specific, so early diagnostic consideration, investigation and empiric treatment is needed
- Prompt investigations (including lumbar puncture), together with early antibiotic administration, gives the best outcomes in bacterial meningitis
- Herpes Simplex Virus (HSV) encephalitis should be considered in any child with encephalopathy
- Aciclovir should be given to children with encephalitis of uncertain aetiology
- At CHW, children with meningitis are usually admitted under general paediatrics. Children with encephalopathy of unknown cause should have neurology consultation.
(see policy 2009-0016 : [Neurology Consultations in ED- CHW](#))

This document reflects what is currently regarded as safe practice. However, as in any clinical situation, there may be factors which cannot be covered by a single set of guidelines. This document does not replace the need for the application of clinical judgement to each individual presentation.

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This Guideline may be varied, withdrawn or replaced at any time.

SCHN contacts:

- At CHW or SCH: Medical Heads of Emergency Department
- At NETS: Medical Director

CHANGE SUMMARY

- Replaces NSW MoH Guideline Acute Management of Bacterial Meningitis GL2014_013

READ ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

- All clinical staff working in Emergency Departments and NETS should read and acknowledge they understand the contents of the policy directive.

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