

Viral Syndrome

What is viral syndrome?

Viral syndrome is a term caregivers' use for general symptoms of a viral infection that has no clear cause. Viruses are spread easily from person to person through the air and on shared items.

What are the signs and symptoms of viral syndrome?

Signs and symptoms may start slowly or suddenly and last hours to days. They can be mild to severe and can change over days or hours.

- Fever and chills, or a rash
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Cough, sore throat, or hoarseness
- Headache, or pain and pressure around your eyes
- Muscle aches and joint pain
- Shortness of breath or wheezing
- Abdominal pain, cramps, and diarrhea
- Nausea, vomiting, or loss of appetite

How is viral syndrome treated?

An illness caused by a virus usually goes away in 10 to 14 days without treatment. The following medicines may be given to help manage your signs and symptoms:

- **Antipyretics:** These reduce fever.
- **Antihistamines:** These help relieve a rash, itching, and trouble breathing.
- **Decongestants:** These decrease a stuffy nose so that you can breathe more easily.
- **Antitussives:** These help control a cough.
- **Antiviral medicine:** These help kill the virus and control symptoms.

What increases my risk for viral syndrome?

- You are an older adult or elderly.
- Your immune system is weakened from illness, or from a stem cell or organ transplant.
- You smoke or are around people who smoke.
- You travel often.
- You swim in a pool that is not chlorinated correctly.

What can I do to help prevent the spread of viral syndrome?

Viruses are spread easily from person to person through the air and on shared items. You can spread a virus to other people for weeks after your symptoms go away. The following are ways to prevent the spread of a virus:

- **Wash your hands:** Wash your hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based gel. Wash your hands after you touch someone who is sick.
- **Wear a mask:** A mask can help you prevent the spread of a virus.
- **Cook and handle food properly:** Cook food completely after cleaning with clean water

What vaccinations should I get to help prevent viral illness?

Ask your caregiver if you should have any of the following vaccines:

- **Meningococcal polysaccharide vaccine (MPV):** The vaccine helps prevent certain types of meningococcal disease.
- **Pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine (PPV):** It helps prevent pneumococcal disease, such as pneumonia. People who are at higher risk for pneumococcal disease also may need the vaccine.
- **Influenza vaccine:** This vaccine helps prevent influenza (flu).

What are the risks of viral syndrome?

Caregivers may not know that you have a serious disease. Signs and symptoms of very serious diseases may look like viral syndrome. A sinus infection can turn into a bacterial infection. A viral infection can lead to a serious, life-threatening infection anywhere in your body. Viral syndrome may make your chronic bronchitis, asthma, or COPD worse. You can get a viral illness more than once, even with treatment.

When should I contact my caregiver? Contact your caregiver if:

- symptoms get worse after 5 to 7 days.
- symptoms do not go away within 10 days.
- You have thick drainage or pus coming out of 1 or both nostrils and pain in one side of your face.
- You have a fever and pain.
- You have green sputum.

When should I seek immediate care?

Seek care immediately if:

- You have continued vomiting and diarrhea.
- You have chest pain or trouble breathing.
- Chest pain, shortness of breath, wheezing or difficulty breathing
- Severe constant right-sided lower abdominal pain
- Feeling weak, dizzy, or like you are going to faint
- Fever of 100.4°F (38°C) oral or higher, not better with fever medication
- Convulsion

Reference:

Micromedex's Care Notes System.