Clinical criteria for case classification
Meningitis manifests most commonly with fever, headache, and a stiff neck; the disease may progress rapidly to shock and death. However, other manifestations may be observed.

Laboratory criteria for case classification
One or more of the following:
• Isolation of a bacterial,\(^1\) cryptococcal,\(^2\) or fungal species from cerebrospinal fluid;
• Or isolation of bacterial\(^1\) or fungal species from brain tissue;
• Or isolation of bacterial,\(^1\) cryptococcal,\(^2\) or fungal species from blood.

\(^1\) Excluding meningitis caused by *Haemophilus influenzae*, *Listeria monocytogenes*, *Neisseria meningitidis*, *Salmonella* species, *Streptococcus pneumoniae*, or other individually reportable bacterial diseases. Please report these cases according to their appropriate case definitions using the specific disease codes.

\(^2\) Excluding meningitis caused by *Cryptococcus neoformans* or an unspecified *Cryptococcus* species. Culture-confirmed *Cryptococcus gattii* meningitis cases should be reported.

Epidemiological criteria for case classification
Not applicable.

Case classification
**Confirmed:**
A clinically compatible illness in a person with laboratory criteria.

Criteria to distinguish a new case from previous reports
Not applicable.

Comments
See the case definitions for *Haemophilus influenzae*, invasive disease (Merlin disease code: 03841); listeriosis (Merlin disease code: 02700) caused by *Listeria monocytogenes*, meningococcal disease caused by *Neisseria meningitidis* (Merlin disease code: 03630); *Streptococcus pneumoniae*, invasive disease (Merlin disease code: 04823, 04830); and salmonellosis (Merlin disease code: 00300) caused by *Salmonella* species to report cases of meningitis caused by these species.