



## Meningococcal Disease

Your child may have been exposed to this disease on \_\_\_\_\_.  
Date(s)

Please check your child for symptoms through \_\_\_\_\_.  
Date

*If your child has symptoms, please contact your child's healthcare provider.*

### **If my child has this disease, when can he or she return to school or child care?**

**Children with meningococcal disease may not return to school until approved by their health care provider.**

**Meningococcal disease is caused by the bacteria *Neisseria meningitidis*.**

When it infects the brain it is called **Meningococcal meningitis**. Symptoms are:

- Sudden fever
- Headache
- Stiff neck
- Nausea and vomiting
- Confusion

When this bacteria infects the blood, it is called **Meningococcal septicemia**. Symptoms are:

- Fatigue
- Vomiting
- Cold hands and feet
- Rapid breathing
- Severe aches in the muscles, joints, chest, or

stomach

- Dark purple rash
- Eyes are sensitive to light

If a person gets sick, symptoms usually start 1 to 10 days after a person is exposed. ***Meningococcal disease is a medical emergency and requires immediate medical attention.***

### **How is meningococcal disease spread?**

This bacteria is spread through contact with saliva or secretions from the nose and throat. This usually happens by:

- Kissing or coughing
- Sharing eating utensils, water bottles, or toothbrushes
- Living in the same household

### **What can I do now?**

Household members and other close contacts of a sick person should receive antibiotic treatment to protect them from getting the disease. **Watch your child** for symptoms of this disease. **If your child develops any symptoms, take your child to the Emergency Department immediately.** It is important to start treatment as early as possible.

### **How can I prevent meningococcal disease in the future?**

The most effective way to prevent against this disease is to get vaccinated. It is recommended that all preteens (11-12 year olds) and teenagers receive these vaccinations, and it is also recommended for some younger children with certain health conditions. Talk to your child's doctor for more information.