



## Meningococcal Disease

Your child may have been exposed to this disease

*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.

For more information, contact your health care provider, your School Nurse 619-258-2231, the San Diego County Health Department at (858) 694-3900, or visit: [www.cdc.gov/meningococcal](http://www.cdc.gov/meningococcal)