

What is meningococcal disease?

- It is an infection caused by bacteria.
- The bacteria can cause a blood infection or meningitis, or both.



What is meningitis?

- Meningitis is a serious illness of the nervous system.
- Diagnosis is made by testing the spinal fluid (spinal tap).
- **Bacterial meningitis** (such as meningococcal disease) is life threatening and requires immediate care.

What are the symptoms?

Meningococcal disease usually occurs in 2 to 10 days after exposure.

People become very ill, very quickly.

Symptoms to watch for are:

- Sudden high fever
- Severe headache, and/or stiff neck
- Feeling very tired or weak
- Sometimes vomiting
- A pinpoint rash or bruising often appears where pressure to the skin occurs (where socks or underwear rub). It may appear as pink or purple raised areas that become larger.

The rash is an important sign that this person needs to see a doctor right away. This is an EMERGENCY!

- Symptoms very quickly develop into irritability, confusion, drowsiness and coma.



How is meningococcal disease spread?

- Through contact with saliva.
- Through droplets from coughing or sneezing.
- Through very close contact, as in cuddling and kissing.

What about close contacts?

- Medicine may be needed to protect household members and other close contacts from getting sick.
- People who feel they may have been exposed to meningococcal disease should contact the Health Department to learn if they need to take the medicine.

What else?

- **See a doctor** right away to diagnose and treat this serious illness.
- Use good **handwashing**.

Prevent Meningococcal Disease

MCHD provides services without regard to race, religion, color, national origin, sex, age, marital status, mental or physical disability, political affiliation or sexual orientation.



If you have questions, call:



Marion County Health Dept
3180 Center St NE
Salem, OR 97301

(503) 588-5342
(503) 588-5400 TDD