

Your child may have been exposed to:

Meningococcal Disease

Meningococcal disease is a bacterial infection of the covering of the brain or spinal cord (meningitis) or of the blood (bacteremia). It requires prompt treatment.

If you think your child has meningococcal disease, tell your childcare provider or call the school.

Keep your child home from childcare and school until your child has been on antibiotics for at least 24 hours. Your child should also be healthy enough for routine activities.

For more information, call Hennepin County HSPHD-Epidemiology at 612-543-5230 or call your local health department.

Symptoms

Your child may have chills, a headache, fever, or stiff neck. Your child may vomit, be extremely sleepy, or be confused and fussy. Also, your child may not be hungry. Sometimes symptoms include a rash or seizures.

If your child is infected, it may take 1 to 10 days for symptoms to start. It usually takes 3 to 4 days.

Spread

- By direct contact with saliva and secretions from the nose or throat (for example kissing or sharing food, beverages, toothbrushes, silverware, etc.).

Contagious period

Until 24 hours after starting antibiotic treatment.

Call your health care provider

If anyone in your home:

- has symptoms of the illness. Your doctor will decide if a test or treatment is needed.
- has been exposed (by direct contact with saliva or is a household contact) to someone with meningococcal disease.

Prevention

- The local or state health department will determine who has been exposed and who will need to take preventive antibiotics.
- Do not share drink containers, water bottles, straws, silverware, cigarettes, lip balm, toothbrushes or other things that come in contact with the mouth. Wash all dishes with hot soapy water between uses.
- Clean and disinfect objects that come in contact with secretions from the nose or mouth. Use a product that kills germs.
- Check with your health care provider about vaccinations that can protect against some strains of meningococcal disease.