



BACTERIAL MENINGITIS (Neisseria Meningitidis)

What is it?

- Swelling of the membranes around the spinal cord or brain caused by an infection

What is the cause?

- Different bacteria can cause bacterial meningitis

What are symptoms that could occur?

- Fever
- Severe headache
- Vomiting/nausea
- Stiff neck and back
- Confusion
- Extreme weakness
- Bulging soft spots on a baby's head
- Coma

Children who have any of the above symptoms need to see a physician right away.

Is it contagious?

- Neisseria meningitidis is spread by intimate or direct contact with nose or throat discharges from an infected person, which includes kissing, sharing eating utensils, lip gloss/stick, cigarettes, or by contact with any fluids from the body of the infected person, such as saliva.
- Bacterial meningitis is more common in infants and children, and adults weakened by illness, drugs or old age

How is it diagnosed and treated?

- Physician evaluation and laboratory analysis
- Treated with antibiotics specific to the type of bacteria

How can bacterial meningitis be prevented?

- Avoid sharing eating utensils, coming in contact with saliva, (either thru secretions or via shared eating utensils), lip gloss/stick, straws, glasses, cigarettes or kissing.
- Frequent hand washing and disposal of tissues in trash containers
- Routine childhood immunizations, especially against Hib
- Vaccination is recommended for students entering college, especially those who will be living in dormitories
- Medication may be prescribed for high risk contacts only, and is generally not indicated for classmates in the school setting. Pre-school settings may differ.

Should the sick child be isolated?

- Yes, away from other people until treatment has started and the physician determines the child is not contagious.

Genesee County Health Department
630 S. Saginaw Street
Flint, Michigan 48502
www.gchd.us

When can the child return to day care or school?

- Following physician recommendation and the child is feeling well

Should schools do special cleaning?

- No. The bacteria cannot live for more than a few minutes outside the body, so special cleaning is not necessary. Routine cleaning with EPA approved products is recommended.

Are there reporting requirements?

- **Immediately notify** the Health Department of suspected or confirmed cases at **257-1017**.

If I have any other questions, whom can I contact?

- Call the Genesee County Health Department, 257-3612

This fact sheet is for information only and is not meant to be used for self diagnosis or as a substitute for consultation with a health care provider. For more information, call your health care provider.

5/27/2004