



BACTERIAL MENINGITIS FACT SHEET

WHAT IS BACTERIAL MENINGITIS?

Meningitis is an infection of the membranes surrounding the brain and spinal cord. There are several types of bacteria that can cause meningitis; streptococcus pneumoniae, group B Streptococcus, Neisseria meningitidis, Haemophilus influenza, and listeria monocytogenes.

HOW DO YOU GET BACTERIAL MENINGITIS?

How people spread the germs often depends on the type of bacteria. Some of the way these bacteria can spread are by:

- coughing or sneezing while in close contact with others
- eating contaminated food.
- mothers may also pass the bacteria to their babies during birth.

SYMPTOMS

- Sudden onset of fever, headache, and stiff neck.
- Other symptoms include nausea, vomiting, sensitivity to light, and confusion.
- Symptoms of bacterial meningitis can appear quickly or over several days.
- Typically they develop within 3 to 7 days after exposure.

TREATMENT

Doctors treat bacterial meningitis with antibiotics. It is important to start treatment as soon as possible. Anyone who thinks they may have meningitis should see a doctor as soon as possible. Discuss treatment options with your doctor.

PREVENTION

- The most effective way to protect you and your child against certain types of bacterial meningitis is to get vaccinated. There are vaccines for three types of bacteria that can cause meningitis: Neisseria meningitidis, streptococcus pneumoniae, and Hib.
- Pregnant women should talk to their doctor about getting tested for group B Streptococcus
- If someone has bacterial meningitis, a doctor may recommend antibiotics to help prevent other people from getting sick. Doctors call this prophylaxis.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water.

DGHD EFFORTS

The Delaware General Health District (DGHD) offers vaccinations. To schedule an appointment, please call (740) 203-2040. Reports of suspected and confirmed cases of disease are made to the DGHD. The DGHD investigates potential sources of illness, conducts surveillance for the spread of disease, and engages in community outreach and education.