



MENINGOCOCCAL DISEASE FACT SHEET

WHAT IS MENINGOCOCCAL DISEASE?

Bacteria called *Neisseria meningitidis* cause meningococcal disease. About 1 in 10 people have these bacteria in the back of their nose and throat with no signs or symptoms of disease, but sometimes the bacteria invade the body and cause certain illnesses, which are known as meningococcal disease.

HOW DO YOU GET MENINGOCOCCAL DISEASE?

People spread meningococcal bacteria to other people by sharing saliva or spit. Generally, it takes close contact (coughing or kissing) to spread these bacteria. Fortunately, people do not catch them through casual contact or by breathing air where someone with meningococcal disease has been.

SYMPTOMS

Symptoms typically appear 2 to 10 days after exposure and may include; Fever, headache, stiff neck, nausea, vomiting, sensitivity to light, and confusion. Meningococemia is a bloodstream infection caused by *Neisseria meningitidis*. Symptoms of meningococemia include fever, fatigues, vomiting, cold hands and feet, body aches, rapid breathing, and diarrhea.

TREATMENT

Meningococcal disease is treated with antibiotics. It is important to start treatment soon as possible. Discuss treatment options with your doctor.

PREVENTION

Keeping up to date with recommended immunizations is the best defense against meningococcal disease. Close contacts of a person with meningococcal disease should receive antibiotics to prevent them from getting sick. This is known as prophylaxis .

Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze.

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.