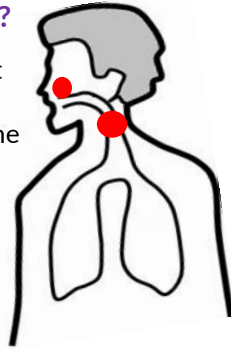


Meningococcal disease

What is Meningococcal disease?

Meningococcal disease is a rare but severe infection that occurs when the germ 'invades' the body from the throat or nose.



How is it spread?

- Meningococcal disease is very hard to catch
- The germ is spread by respiratory droplets from close or prolonged person to person contact
- The germ doesn't live more than a few seconds outside the body



People **DO NOT** catch the germ by casual contact, breathing the air or touching a surface where someone with meningococcal germ has been

If you have any of these symptoms, go to your health clinic or doctor immediately



Fever



Headache or neck stiffness



Drowsiness or confusion



Joint pain



Rash of purple spots



Dislike of bright lights



Vomiting

YOUNG BABIES may have a high pitched cry, skin rash, dislike being carried, hard to wake from sleep or refuse to eat or drink

Meningitis Foundation 2002

How is it diagnosed?

Your doctor or health centre staff will recommend testing as required

How is it treated?

Meningococcal disease needs urgent treatment with antibiotics

How is it prevented?

Vaccination protects the person and reduces the spread of the disease.

There are 4 types of meningococcal vaccines available in Australia.

Discuss vaccination with your doctor or health centre staff

Household and close contacts

High risk contacts will be identified by local public health units and offered clearance antibiotics and vaccination as per the national guidelines. A high risk contact :

- lived in the same house or dormitory as the case in the 7 days prior to onset of illness



- engaged in Intimate kissing or was a sexual partner of a case in the 7 days prior to onset of illness
- child or staff at child care, kindergarten where the case spent 2 full days (6-8 hours per day) or a total of 20 cumulative hours in the 7 days prior to onset of illness



- sat directly next to a case in a vehicle (bus, plane, train) for greater than 8 hours