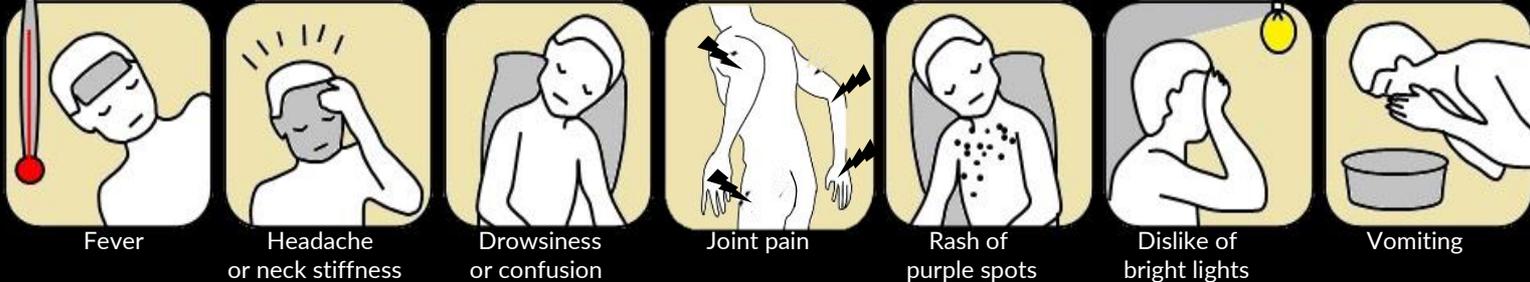


Contacts of person with meningococcal disease - should I be concerned?

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



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

What is meningococcal disease?

Meningococcal disease is an uncommon but severe infection that occurs when the meningococcal bacteria (germ) 'invades' the body from the throat or nose.

Someone I know has been in contact with a person with meningococcal disease - should I be concerned?

Meningococcal is a very serious disease, but meningococcal is also very difficult to catch.

People do not catch the meningococcal germ through casual contact or by just breathing air or by touching a surface where someone with meningococcal has been.

The germ is spread by respiratory droplets from close person to person contact. The Centre for Disease Control will identify "high risk" contacts of confirmed cases. These people are followed up and given antibiotic medication and vaccination as per the Australian Guidelines.

A 'high risk' contact is a person

- That has lived in the same house or dormitory as the case in the 7 days prior to onset of illness
- That engaged in intimate kissing or was a sexual partner in the 7 days prior to onset of illness
- Any child or staff at child care, kindergarten or preschool 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
- That sat directly next to a case in a vehicle (bus, plane, train) for greater than 8 hours
- Healthcare worker who has had unprotected close exposure to large particle respiratory droplets of a case during airway management (Intubation, suction)

In circumstances where a person with meningococcal disease has attended primary or high school for 2 full days (6-8 hours per day) or a cumulative 20 hours in the 7 days before onset of illness, the Centre for Disease Control will work with the Education Department and may decide to offer vaccination to the immediate class including the teacher.

For further information about meningococcal disease

<http://digitallibrary.health.nt.gov.au/prodjspui/handle/10137/1320>