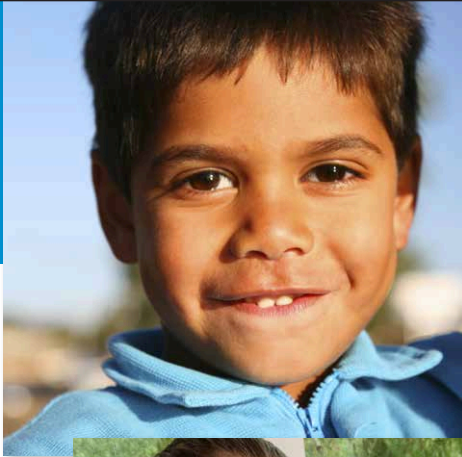


Meningococcal Disease



Meningococcal disease can develop within hours of the first symptoms appearing and can be fatal.

Winter and early spring is the peak time for meningococcal disease. Be on the lookout for symptoms and seek treatment immediately if they occur. Vaccines are effective, but do not protect against all strains of the disease.



Symptoms may include:

- ▶ sudden onset of fever
- ▶ cold hands and feet
- ▶ limb/joint pain
- ▶ nausea and vomiting
- ▶ headache
- ▶ neck stiffness
- ▶ dislike of bright lights
- ▶ pin-prick rash changing to large red-purple blotches

Babies and very young children may also:

- ▶ be irritable
- ▶ have difficulty waking
- ▶ have rapid or laboured breathing
- ▶ have diarrhoea
- ▶ have a high-pitched cry
- ▶ refuse to eat

Symptoms early in the illness are common to many mild viral illnesses, so it can be difficult for doctors to diagnose the disease in the early stages.

Remember these 3 key messages:

- 1** Anyone with symptoms of meningococcal disease should seek immediate medical care.
- 2** A rash does not always appear, and not all of the symptoms of meningococcal disease may be present at once.
- 3** Seek medical care again if the illness gets worse, even if this is shortly after the previous visit.



Health

For more information on meningococcal disease go to www.health.nsw.gov.au or phone your local Public Health Unit on **1300 066 055**