

DO YOU KNOW ENOUGH ABOUT MENINGOCOCCAL DISEASE?

Meningococcal disease is rare, but can progress rapidly and be potentially devastating.

It is a bacterial infection of the blood and/or the membranes that line the spinal cord and brain.

SPEAK TO YOUR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT MENINGOCOCCAL DISEASE AND HOW YOU CAN HELP PROTECT YOUR FAMILY.

SCAN ME



Scan the QR code or visit [knowmeningococcal.com.au](https://www.knowmeningococcal.com.au) to learn more about meningococcal disease

HOW DO PEOPLE GET MENINGOCOCCAL DISEASE?

The bacteria that causes meningococcal disease can live harmlessly in the nose and throat and can be spread from one person to another by close contact. They can be spread through behaviours such as coughing, sneezing and living in close quarters.

Approximately 10% of the general population will carry the bacteria at any one time without ever becoming ill, however in a small number of people the bacteria can cause disease.¹

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF MENINGOCOCCAL DISEASE?

Early symptoms can be difficult to recognise as they may be similar to a cold or flu. However, symptoms can progress quickly and may include the following:^{2,3}

- Refusal to eat
- Fever
- Extreme tiredness
- Vomiting
- Diarrhoea
- Cold hands and feet
- Sensitivity to light
- Pale or blotchy skin

In the later stages of meningococcal disease the bacteria can enter the bloodstream and multiply, damaging the walls of the blood vessels. This can cause a dark purple rash, however it may not always appear. If you're concerned about your child's health, act fast - don't wait for a rash and seek medical attention immediately.

WHO'S AT RISK?

Meningococcal disease can occur at any age. Babies less than 2 years of age are most at risk, followed by adolescents 15 to 19 years of age.^{4,5}

CAN MENINGOCOCCAL DISEASE BE SERIOUS?

Meningococcal disease is rare and most children survive. If meningococcal disease is not diagnosed or treated quickly, it can lead to serious long-term disability or death within 24 hours.⁶



Up to **1 in 5** may have permanent disability including brain damage, deafness and loss of limbs.^{6,7}



Up to **1 in 10** may die.^{6,7}

ARE THERE DIFFERENT TYPES OF MENINGOCOCCAL DISEASE?

There are multiple types (strains) of meningococcal bacteria. Globally, there are 6 strains that cause the majority of disease (A, B, C, W, X and Y).¹ Currently in Australia, 3 strains cause the majority of disease (B, W and Y).^{4,5}

TREATMENT AND PREVENTION

Early recognition and treatment of meningococcal disease offers the best chance of recovery.

Good hygiene practices are important in helping to prevent the spread of germs. Vaccination may also be a good option to help prevent meningococcal disease.

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References: **1.** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Meningococcal Disease Causes and How It Spreads. <https://www.cdc.gov/meningococcal/about/causes-transmission.html> [accessed April 2023]. **2.** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Meningococcal Disease Signs and Symptoms. <https://www.cdc.gov/meningococcal/about/symptoms.html> [accessed April 2023]. **3.** The Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne. Meningococcal infection. https://www.rch.org.au/kidsinfo/fact_sheets/Meningococcal_infection/ [accessed April 2023]. **4.** Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI). Australian Immunisation Handbook, Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care, Canberra, 2022. <https://immunisationhandbook.health.gov.au/contents/vaccine-preventable-diseases/meningococcal-disease> [accessed April 2023]. **5.** Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care. Australian Meningococcal Surveillance Programme Annual Report 2021. [https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/2A15CD097063EF40CA2587CE008354F1/\\$File/australian_meningococcal_surveillance_programme_annual_report_2021.pdf](https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/2A15CD097063EF40CA2587CE008354F1/$File/australian_meningococcal_surveillance_programme_annual_report_2021.pdf) [accessed April 2023]. **6.** World Health Organization. Meningitis key facts. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/meningitis> [accessed April 2023]. **7.** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Meningococcal Disease Diagnosis, Treatment, and Complications. <https://www.cdc.gov/meningococcal/about/diagnosis-treatment.html> [accessed April 2023].