

Meningococcal Disease is caused by the bacterium *Neisseria meningitides*. It most commonly manifests as meningitis and or blood infection that may progress rapidly to shock and death. It may also have other forms of disease.

Symptoms

- The disease characterized by the blood infection onset is usually abrupt with fever, chills, not feeling well, and a rash.
- The disease can come on suddenly with great severity, and end in shock, coma and death, even with proper treatment.
- Meningitis presents with altered mental status and seizures in some people.
- Individual symptoms vary widely from patient to patient.
- The classical symptoms of headache, stiff neck and confusion occur in less than half of patients.

Transmission

- The disease is spread from person to person by infected respiratory secretions that are airborne.

Treatment

- Hospitalization is usually required to give the kinds of antibiotics needed to treat Meningococcal disease.

Prevention

- All household and child care or preschool contacts should receive preventative medication, preferably within 24 hours of diagnosis.
- Rifampin and Cipro are the two most common antibiotics use as preventative medication.
- Routine immunization with the Meningococcal vaccine is recommended for high-risk groups, such as travelers to endemic areas and college students.

Additional Information

- A person with meningococcal disease must be isolated, including the use of respiratory isolation precaution, until twenty-four hours after beginning effective therapy.

All information is general in nature and is not intended to be used as a substitute for appropriate professional advice.

