

MENINGOCOCCAL DISEASE: DON'T WAIT – TAKE ACTION

There have been 3 confirmed cases of meningococcal disease in the MidCentral region during July/August.

Meningococcal disease is a serious bacterial disease which can affect anyone but it is more common in children under the age of 5, teenagers and young adults. It can look like influenza in its early stages but it can very quickly get much worse. The illness may develop slowly over 1-2 days or quickly over a period of a few hours so it is important to not wait and seek immediate medical help in the early stages of symptoms – ring a doctor - or ring Healthline 0800 611 116 straightaway at any time of the day, even if you have already been seen by a doctor.

Don't be put off. Insist on immediate action.

Your baby or child may:

- have a fever
- high pitched cry or unsettled
- refuse drinks or feeds
- vomit
- be sleepy or floppy/harder to wake
- have a stiff neck
- dislike bright lights
- have a rash or spots (that don't fade when pressed and look like small bruises)

Adults may:

- a fever
- a headache
- vomit
- be sleepy, confused, delirious or unconscious
- a stiff neck
- dislike bright lights
- have joint pain and aching muscles
- have a rash or spots (that don't fade when pressed and look like small bruises)

The best way to avoid getting sick with meningococcal disease is to not share spit/saliva and other respiratory secretions with other people. To do this:

- don't share food, drinks, cutlery, toothbrushes, pacifiers, cigarettes and other objects that can transfer spit
- cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze
- washing and drying your hands can help reduce the chance of spreading the bacteria that can cause illness

There are vaccines for certain strains of meningococcal disease available in NZ. Some are free for certain high risk groups. There is a charge for vaccines for adults and children who do not fit into these groups. See your GP for further information.

