



Frequently Asked Questions Invasive Meningococcal Disease (IMD)

1. What is Meningococcal Disease (IMD)?

Meningococcal disease is a serious bacterial infection that can cause meningitis (infection of the lining around the brain and spinal cord) and bloodstream infections.

2. Is meningitis contagious?

Yes, it is contagious.

3. How does one get the disease?

It is transmitted by droplets from someone who has the infection when they cough, sneeze, kiss others or share items that touch the mouth, such as soothers, cups and bottles.

4. What are the symptoms?

There is a sudden onset of fever and a bad headache, often accompanied by a stiff neck, sensitivity to light, and nausea and vomiting. There may also be small red rashes or bruises anywhere on the skin that don't fade when you press them. Some people may carry germs without symptoms, yet they can still pass them to others who are not immunized.

5. What are the complications?

Death in 10% of those infected, kidney failure, permanent brain damage, hearing loss, visual impairment, amputation and skin scarring.

6. Is there treatment for meningitis?

The disease is a medical emergency. Antibiotics are used for treatment. The outcome is better if diagnosed and treated early.

7. Do parents need to be concerned?

Yes. If the child has a high fever and the symptoms listed above, they should see their health center or health care provider immediately, as children can get very sick quickly and may develop serious complications.

8. Are there ways to avoid getting meningitis?

The best way to protect oneself from meningitis is to get immunized. It is free and offered by your health center. Other sensible precautions, like avoiding sharing utensils, drinking glasses, or anything that touches the mouth, are useful.

