

MENINGOCOCCAL DISEASE FACT SHEET



ABOUT

Meningococcal disease is a rare but often life-threatening disease caused by the bacterium *Neisseria meningitidis* (commonly known as meningococcus).

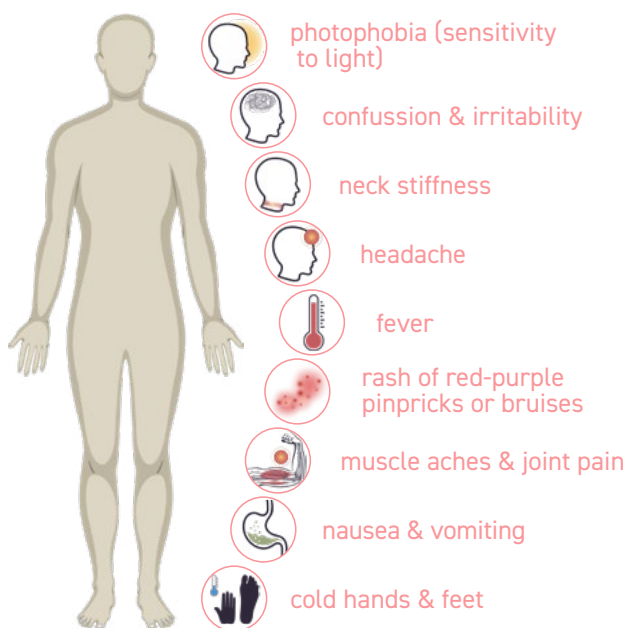
There are 13 strains of meningococcus. The most common strains which cause disease are A, B, C, W and Y.

Most meningococcal disease occurs in children aged under five years of age, older adolescents, and young adults.

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

People with meningococcal disease can become extremely unwell very quickly and they may feel sicker than they have ever felt before.

After being infected, it usually takes one to ten days for symptoms to appear. The possible symptoms are:



If you experience symptoms, contact your GP or HCP.

HOW IT SPREADS

Meningococcus is only carried and passed on by humans. It is spread by coughing, sneezing and regular, close, prolonged household or intimate contact with infected secretions from the back of the nose and throat.

The bacteria can only survive a few seconds outside the body so they cannot be picked up from the environment. Carriage rates are highest in older teenagers.

PREVENTION & TREATMENT

Immunisation is the best protection against meningococcal disease.

Children are eligible for meningococcal disease vaccination under the [National Immunisation Program](#) (NIP).

Quadrivalent meningococcal disease vaccine protects against strains A, C, W and Y. The vaccine is part of the National Immunisation Program (NIP) and is free for select groups. Meningococcal B vaccine is available on private prescription.

If meningococcal disease is suspected, an antibiotic (usually penicillin) is given immediately by injection. People with meningococcal disease are almost always admitted to hospital and may require admission to an intensive care unit.

For further information on available meningococcal disease-specific preventative treatment options, contact your GP or HCP.