

Mission:

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



Rick Scott
Governor

John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS
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Vision: To be the **Healthiest State** in the Nation

BACTERIAL MENINGITIS

What is Bacterial Meningitis?

Several different types of bacteria can cause bacterial meningitis. The most common causes in children and adolescents include *Streptococcus pneumoniae*, *Neisseria meningitidis*, and *Haemophilus influenzae* type B. Bacterial meningitis infections are usually severe.

What are the signs and symptoms of a Bacterial Meningitis infection?

Signs and symptoms of bacterial meningitis include a sudden onset of fever, headache, and stiff neck but may also include nausea, vomiting, photophobia (sensitivity to light), limb pain, a blood red rash and an altered mental status such as confusion. Later symptoms of infection include seizures, coma, etc. which is why seeking medical treatment as soon as possible is very important.

How are Bacterial Meningitis infections spread?

Some bacteria that cause meningitis can be spread by respiratory and throat secretions during activities such as kissing. Spread can occur when a person has had close or long contact with a sick person such as household members or daycare providers/attendees.

What is the incubation period of Bacterial Meningitis and how long is it contagious?

Symptoms generally develop 1-10 days after exposure, but usually less than 4 days. Meningitis is contagious until at least 24 hours after treatment with antibiotics the bacteria is sensitive to.

What should I do if I think I have a Bacterial Meningitis infection?

Persons who have these symptoms should see their physician immediately. It is critical that individuals tell their doctor immediately if they believe they have been exposed to someone with meningitis.

How can I prevent myself and others from getting a Bacterial Meningitis infection?

The most effective prevention of bacterial meningitis is completing the recommended vaccine schedule that includes vaccines for the three most common bacteria that cause meningitis in children. Antibiotic treatment may be recommended for household members or individuals with close contact with the infected individual. Bacterial meningitis is a reportable disease and should be reported to the health department. The health department will assist with determination of high risk or low risk contacts.

For more information, please contact the Florida Department of Health in Orange County Epidemiology Program at 407-858-1420. You may also visit the Epidemiology Program website, <http://orchd.com/generalHealth/epidemiology/index.asp>, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website, <http://www.cdc.gov/meningitis/bacterial.html>, or the DOH-Orange School Health website at <http://orchd.com/personalHealth/schoolHealth/index.asp> for additional information.

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