Bacterial Meningitis

What is it?

- When meningococcal bacteria infects the lining of the brain or spinal cord, it is called bacterial meningitis.
- You may become sick within 1 to 3 days of being infected with the bacteria, but may take as long as 10 days.
- Symptoms include:
  - a fever
  - feeling generally unwell
  - headache
  - vomiting
  - stiff neck
- Someone with this infection may become excited or confused.
- Sometimes a body rash develops.
- Anyone who develops a fever with any of the above symptoms should see a doctor right away.

How is it spread?

- The bacteria enter the body through the nose and throat. The bacteria is commonly found in throats of people who have no symptoms and are not ill.
- It is spread by direct contact with saliva or secretions from the nose or mucous that is coughed up from an infected person.
- This bacteria does not survive well in the air and is not spread through the air.

Who is at risk of bacterial meningitis?

- People at risk are those who have direct contact with the infected person through kissing, shared cigarettes, food and drink cans.
- Most people who come in contact with the bacteria do not become sick.
- The disease primarily affects very young children and teenagers.
- Adults can also be affected.

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Is there treatment for it?

- Yes, it is treated with antibiotics.
- However, even when the best antibiotics are given under the best of circumstances, meningitis may result in death or serious problems for adults and children.

What can be done to prevent the spread of it?

- People who have had contact with the saliva, nose and throat secretions of the ill person should receive antibiotics to prevent them from developing the disease.
- A vaccine is also available.

For more information

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

https://www.cdc.gov/meningococcal/about/

Stop the spread of germs and infection. Clean your hands.	

This fact sheet provides basic general information only and is to be used as a quick guide, not as a complete resource on the subject. If you have any further questions, ask Infection Prevention & Control or your health care provider.

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