



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Region IV Public Health
Clark, Cowlitz, Skamania, Wahkiakum counties
and Cowlitz Tribe

Health Advisory

Please deliver a copy of the accompanying alert to each provider in your organization.

Thank you

Questions regarding this alert may be directed to the office of:

Alan Melnick, MD, MPH
Health Officer

Clark County Public Health

(360) 397-8412

Please Distribute

Categories of Health Alert messages:

Health Alert: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: provides important information for specific incident for situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; no immediate action necessary.



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Region IV Public Health

Clark, Cowlitz, Skamania, Wahkiakum counties
and Cowlitz Tribe

HEALTH ADVISORY

February 6, 2014

TO: Physicians and other Healthcare Providers
FROM: Alan Melnick, MD, MPH, CPH, Health Officer
RE: Suspect Meningococcal Disease in a School, Clark County

Recently, a suspect case of Meningococcal Disease attended Cape Horn Skye Elementary. Clark County Public Health is taking precautions to prevent transmission, which may include directing persons to their healthcare providers for follow-up.

As a provider you may be receiving calls from parents and/or staff with questions about Meningococcal Disease symptoms, testing, and/or preventive treatment. We do not believe that the level of exposure was enough to recommend preventive treatment. However, we sent a letter to parents of exposed children, notifying them of the exposure and educating parents on the symptoms of Meningococcal Disease.

We wish to remind healthcare providers that Meningococcal Disease is a notifiable condition in Washington and should be reported to local health jurisdictions immediately.

To report cases of Meningococcal Disease or if you have any questions, please contact your local public health department:

- Clark County Public Health: (360) 397-8182.

Attached is a letter we are sending today to parents of children who were in the same classroom as the suspect case. For additional information on Meningococcal Disease, please see:

<http://www.cdc.gov/meningococcal/index.html>

Thank you for your partnership.



proud past, promising future

CLARK COUNTY
WASHINGTON

Public Health
1601 E. Fourth Plain Blvd.
P. O. Box 9825
Vancouver, WA 98666-8825

DATE: February 6, 2014
TO: Parents/Guardians of Children that attend Cape Horn Skye 2nd grade Class Room #116.
FROM: Clark County Public Health
RE: Suspect *Meningococcal Disease*, *Potential Exposure*

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Clark County Public Health is investigating a suspected case of *meningococcal disease* in an individual who attended your child's classroom during the contagious period of the illness. Investigations of outbreaks of meningococcal disease have shown that close contacts are at risk for spread of the disease. There is no evidence that your child is a "close contact" of the ill individual so health care officials are NOT recommending preventive medication at this time. "Close contacts" means those sharing the household, persons sharing eating utensils, cups and water glasses, persons directly exposed to oral secretions and day care center contacts (children and caregivers).

Though the risk is very low, we are asking that you monitor your child for any symptoms of *meningococcal disease through February 10, 2014*. Symptoms of *meningococcal disease* can include any or all of the following:

- Sudden high fever
- Headache
- Stiff neck
- Nausea and vomiting
- Sensitivity to bright lights
- Confusion and loss of consciousness
- Rash

If your child develops any of these symptoms on or prior to February 10th, you should contact your health care provider right away, and notify them that there was a potential exposure to *meningococcal disease*. Also, please contact Clark County Public Health immediately to notify us of the illness at 360-397-8182. If your child is ill, do not take them to any preschool, daycare, or church nurseries until speaking with us. This is to prevent the spread of illness to others.

If you have questions, please contact our communicable disease staff at (360) 397-8182. Please see the attached, "Fact Sheet" for further information. Thank you.

What is Meningococcal Disease?

Meningococcal (men-in-jo-COCK'-ul) disease is caused by a bacterial infection in the blood and fluid around the brain. When brain fluid is infected it is called "meningitis". Meningococcal disease can spread quickly and lead to death.

How is Meningococcal Disease Spread?

Kissing, coughing and sneezing can spread the disease through bacteria in saliva and nasal fluids. The bacteria are not as contagious as the common cold or flu.

Who is at Risk and What Can Be Done?

Those in close contact* with an infected person are at highest risk of getting the disease and may need to be treated with antibiotics. The Health District or your doctor will tell you if you should be treated.

**People in the same household or childcare center and others who have had direct contact with saliva or nasal fluids are at highest risk.*

What Are the Signs and Symptoms?

- Sudden high fever
- Headache
- Stiff neck
- Nausea and vomiting
- Sensitivity to bright lights
- Confusion
- Loss of consciousness
- Rash (see picture below)
- In infants and young children fever and vomiting may be the only signs.



Sometimes a reddish-purple rash may appear anywhere on the body. It may be hard to see the rash on dark skin.

Can Meningococcal Disease Be Treated?

- Yes, it can be treated with a number of effective antibiotics.
- It is very important to start treatment early.

What Should I Do if I Think My Child Has Meningococcal Disease?

- You know your child best. If you suspect your child has this disease contact your doctor immediately.
- The sooner your child gets medical care, the better the chances of full recovery.

What Else Can Parents Do?

Researchers have found a link between meningococcal disease and exposure to cigarette smoke. Do not smoke or let others smoke around your children.