



A pupil at your child's school has been admitted to hospital with suspected meningitis or blood poisoning due to the meningococcal germ. This letter is to give you some information about the disease. There is no reason to make any change in the school routine and no reason for children to be kept at home.

### **How the disease spreads**

Meningococcal disease is not very infectious and it very rarely spreads from child to child within a school. The germ which causes the illness lives naturally in the back of the throat and spreads between people in droplets from the mouth and nose. Many people carry the germ in their throats without becoming unwell.

### **Preventing the spread of meningococcal disease**

We try to stop the disease spreading by giving antibiotics to the very close family contacts of the patient with the illness. That usually means that only people who live in the same house as the sick child need treatment. School contacts are only very rarely at a higher risk and therefore do not normally need antibiotics or investigation. The people who need treatment have already been identified and received antibiotics.

### **Symptoms of meningococcal meningitis/blood poisoning**

The risk of another case in the school is very small, it is sensible to be aware of the signs and symptoms:

- High temperature
- Vomiting
- Severe headache
- Stiff neck
- Dislike of bright light
- Bruising rash
- Rapid breathing
- Cold hands and feet
- Joint or muscle pain
- Drowsiness or confusion

Not all of these signs may show at once, but someone with this illness will become very ill. The illness may progress over one or two days, but it can develop very rapidly, sometimes in a matter of hours.

The early signs can be similar to a bad 'flu', but **BE WATCHFUL** and use your instincts. **IF SOMEONE BECOMES ILL WITH SOME OF THESE SIGNS OR SYMPTOMS**, contact your GP / doctor or call 111 urgently to ask for advice.

Please ensure your child is up to date with their routine vaccinations via your GP.

### ***Further information***

<b>Health Protection Team</b>	<b>0300 303 8596 Option 1</b>
Meningitis Now	0808 801 0388
Meningitis Research Foundation	0808 800 3344
NHS 111	111
Meningitis Now	<a href="http://www.meningitisnow.org">www.meningitisnow.org</a>
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