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WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT MENINGITIS

What are the signs and symptoms of meningitis? High fever, headache, and stiff neck are common symptoms of meningitis in anyone over the age of 2 years. These symptoms can develop over several hours, or they may take 1 to 2 days. Other symptoms may include nausea, vomiting, discomfort looking into bright lights, confusion, and sleepiness. As the disease progresses; patients of any age may have seizures.

Is meningitis contagious? Yes, some forms of bacterial meningitis are contagious. The bacteria are spread through the exchange of respiratory and throat secretions (i.e. coughing, kissing). Fortunately, none of the bacteria that cause meningitis are as contagious as things like the common cold or the flu, and they are not spread by casual contact or by simply breathing the air where a person with meningitis has been.

Can meningitis be prevented? A new vaccine has recently been developed. It will last 10 years and has memory (which is five to seven years longer than the current vaccine). It is called Menactra. It should be out before the end of the year. It will be recommended for 11-21 year olds. We encourage you to consult with your physician about this vaccine. Vaccines are not 100% effective (usually in the 80-95% range).

More information about meningitis or vaccines can be found by accessing the following link:

http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo/meningococcal_g.htm

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