

Meningococcal Disease (MenB) Information for awareness

An outbreak of **Meningococcal group B (MenB)** meningitis has been reported in **Kent (week beginning 16 March 2026)** The following information is for awareness raising.

Types of Meningitis: There are two main types of Meningitis - [Viral meningitis](#) is the most common cause of meningitis, and [Bacterial meningitis](#) although less common it is more serious than viral meningitis. **If Meningitis is suspected seek medical attention immediately.**

MenB - Bacterial Meningitis:

- Meningitis B (MenB) is one of many bacteria that can cause Meningitis. Many people (about 1 in 10) carry this bacteria in the back of their nose or throat without feeling ill.
- **How do you get bacterial meningitis:** The bacteria can be transmitted (passed) from person to person by coughing, sneezing, and kissing. Occasionally the bacteria defeats the body's defences and causes infection.
- **Incubation period** - the time it takes from being exposed to the bacteria to when symptoms start is usually two to seven days after exposure, but symptoms can appear anytime between one and ten days.
- **Infectious period** – the timeframe for when you can pass on the bacteria to someone else is a risk until you have completed 24 hours antibiotic treatment then you are considered non-infectious. You must take all the antibiotics prescribed as directed by a healthcare professional.
- **Who is at risk?** - Babies and young children (most cases occur in children under five), Teenagers and young adults, and people with certain medical conditions or weakened immune systems.
- **Prevention** - [MenB vaccine](#) is available and recommended for infants as part of the routine [childhood immunisation schedule](#) in the UK and the [MenACWY vaccine](#) is recommended for all teenagers. It is usually given to children when they are 13 or 14 years old (school year 9). If you missed having the vaccine when you were at school, you can get it up to the age of 25 years. Good hygiene practices, such as regular hand washing and not sharing eating utensils, can help reduce transmission.
- **Symptoms:** The symptoms can develop rapidly, especially in infants and young children. **Early recognition is crucial.** People can get a headache, high temperature (over 38 degrees Celsius), stiff neck, vomit, become sensitive to light and confused with a [non-blanching rash](#) (rash does not fade or go away when pressed with a clear drinking glass or tumbler). On [black or dark skin](#) this can be more difficult to see so check a persons palms, or soles of their feet or the roof of their mouth.



- **What can happen?:** Once in the bloodstream the bacteria can cause meningococcal disease which can be life threatening by travelling to infect the protective layers

around the brain and spinal cord (the meninges – pronounced meh-NIN-jeez) which is known as [Meningitis](#) or [Septicaemia](#) a infection in the bloodstream.

- **How is it treated?** Treatment for people **symptomatic/diagnosed** with MenB typically involves intravenous antibiotics and supportive hospital care. Early intervention greatly improves outcomes.
- For **close contacts** (prolonged close contact/ household contacts) of people diagnosed with Men B they can receive preventative treatment – ideally within 24 hours of the initial case but can be up to seven days afterwards which is the highest risk period.
- Contacts should be vigilant for symptoms of meningococcal disease (fever, headache, stiff neck, rash) for at least 4 weeks and seek immediate emergency medical care if they appear.
- If you believe you have been in contact with a confirmed case of MenB, contact your GP, NHS 111 (in the UK), or your local public health authority immediately for advice and treatment.

Further Information and resources

For Healthcare Professionals

[Cases of invasive meningococcal disease notified in Kent - GOV.UK](#)

[Meningococcal: the green book, chapter 22 - GOV.UK](#)

[Guidance for public health management of meningococcal disease in the UK](#)

[Meningococcal B vaccination programme for infants: information for healthcare practitioners - GOV.UK](#)

[Cases of invasive meningococcal disease notified in Kent - GOV.UK](#)

[Laboratory confirmed cases of invasive meningococcal infection in England: July to September 2025 - GOV.UK](#)

[Meningococcal disease: guidance, data, and analysis - GOV.UK](#)

[Meningitis awareness for staff: know the signs and symptoms](#)

[Meningitis and septicaemia: prevention and management in higher education institutions - GOV.UK](#)

[Complete routine immunisation schedule from 1 September 2025 - GOV.UK](#)

[Meningitis | Fact Sheet | Health Information | Brain & Spine Foundation](#)

For the Public:

[Meningitis: do not ignore the signs and symptoms - GOV.UK](#)

[Meningitis – Signs & symptoms of septicaemia \(Leaflet UKHSA 2023\)](#)

[What is meningitis? Symptoms, risks and how to protect yourself – UK Health Security Agency](#)

[Meningitis - NHS](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions | Tetanus, Diphtheria, and Polio and Meningitis](#)

[Immunisations for teenagers and young people - GOV.UK](#)

[MenACWY vaccine: information for young people - GOV.UK](#)

[MenACWY vaccine - NHS](#)

[Meningitis Now | Meningitis charity | Research and awareness](#)

[Meningitis Research Foundation | The world's leading meningitis charity](#)

[NHS vaccinations and when to have them - NHS](#)

[Meningitis-Brain-Spine-Foundation.pdf](#)

[Current meningitis vaccines available in the UK - Meningitis Explained | Meningitis Now](#)