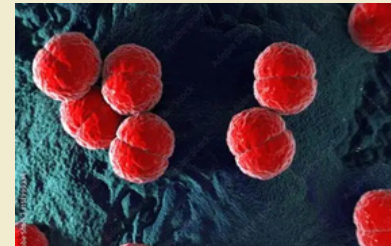




WATERBURY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

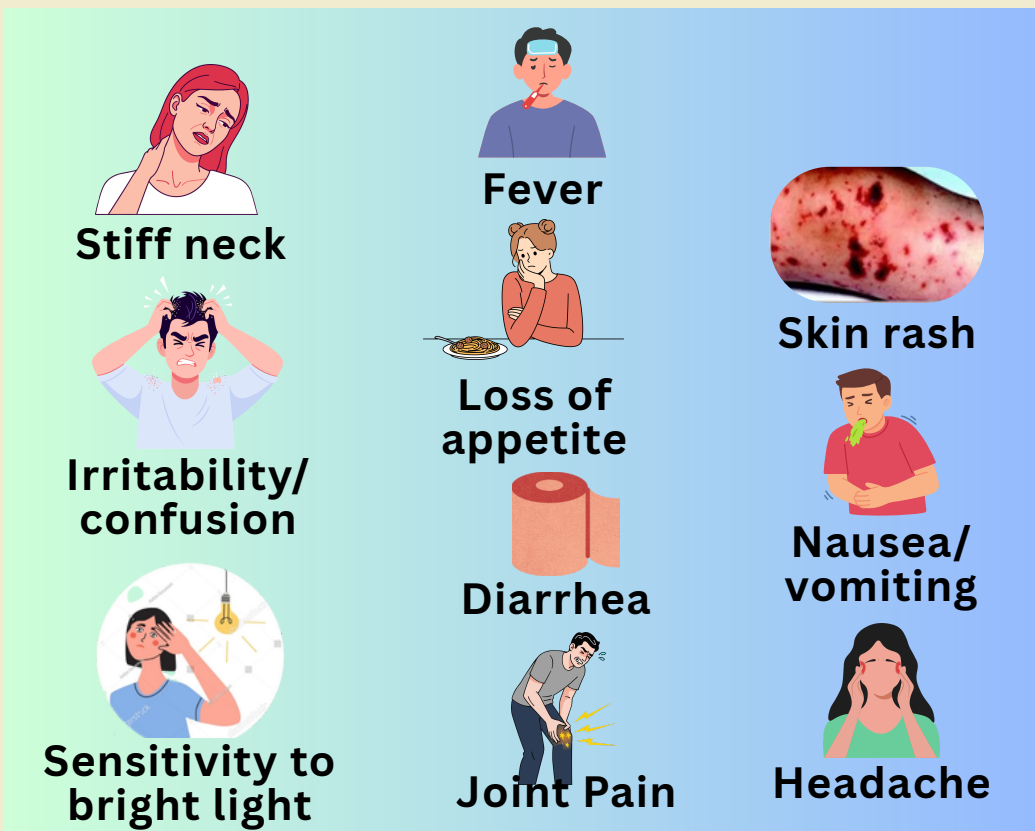
Let's Learn About Meningococcal Disease



What is meningococcal disease?

- Meningococcal disease is the name for the infection caused by bacteria called *Neisseria meningitidis (N.meningitidis)*. It has 13 different subtypes.
- Subtypes A, B, C, Y, and W-135 cause the majority of the serious cases.
- **N. meningitidis** can infect your blood and meninges, the thin membranes that surround your brain and spinal cord and protect them.
- Meningococcal disease is serious. It can be fatal without treatment.
- Early diagnosis and antibiotic treatment are important.
- Vaccination offers the best protection in all preteens and teens, and in babies, children and adults at increased risk of meningococcal disease.

Signs and symptoms of meningococcal disease in adults



Signs and symptoms of meningococcal disease in babies

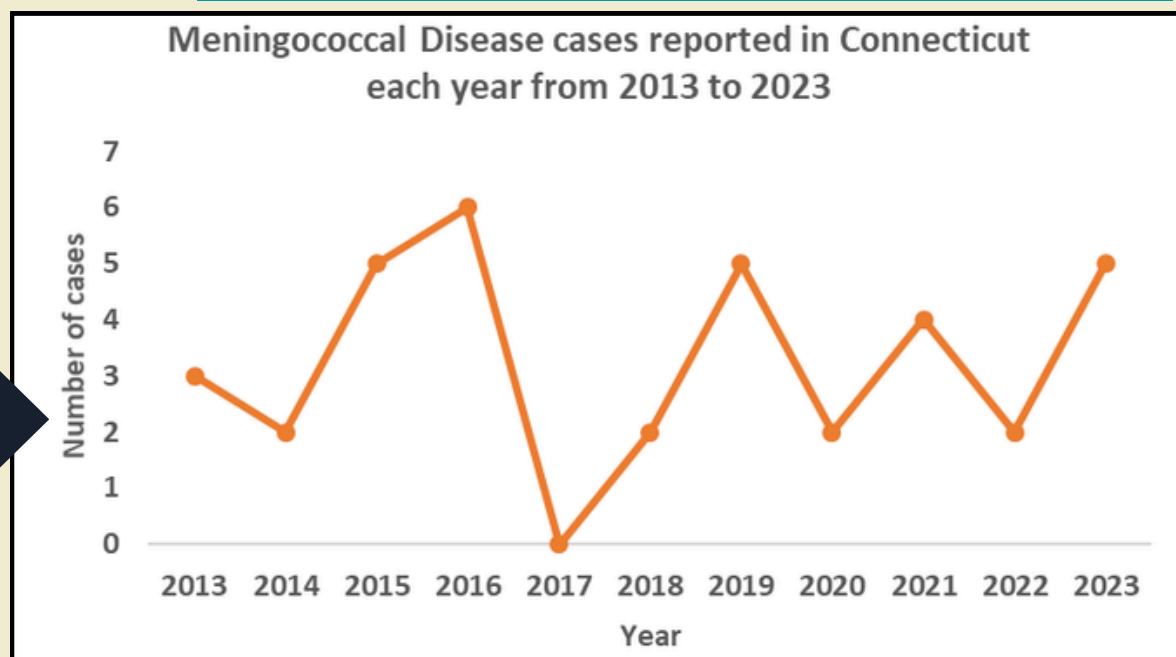
- Being irritable for no reason
- Being twitchy or floppy
- Being very tired
- A bulging soft spot in their skull
- Refusing to eat

How do people get meningococcal disease?

- Meningococcal disease spreads from person to person, through close contact with someone who has it. It spreads through spit or mucus during activities like:
 - Coughing, sneezing or kissing.
 - Sharing drinks or utensils such as forks or spoons.

How many meningococcal disease cases occur in Connecticut each year?

- Meningococcal disease cases have been reported in Connecticut every year since 2013, with a maximum of 6 cases reported in 2016.
- Most cases of meningococcal disease are diagnosed during winter and spring months, but cases may also occur year-round.



Data source: CT DPH Annual statistics- Total reported cases by disease (2013-2023)

Complications of meningococcal disease?

- About **10 to 15 out of every 100 people** who have meningococcal disease die, even with treatment.
- About **1 in 5 people** who survive have long-term complications, including:
 - Brain damage
 - Kidney damage
 - Loss of limbs
 - Nerve damage
 - Total hearing loss (deafness)

How is meningococcal disease diagnosed?

- Meningococcal disease can be challenging for healthcare providers to diagnose because it shares many of the same symptoms as the common cold or flu.
- If a provider suspects you have meningococcal disease, they'll recommend:
 - Blood tests
 - Spinal tap to collect spinal fluid
 - PCR test

How is meningococcal disease treated?

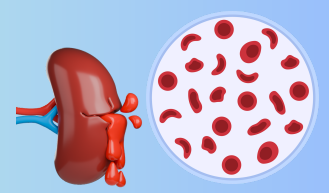
- Healthcare providers treat meningococcal disease with antibiotics.
- It's very important to start treatment as soon as possible.
- In addition to antibiotics, other treatments may be needed such as:
 - Corticosteroids to reduce damage to your nervous system
 - IV fluids
 - Medications to treat low blood pressure
 - Oxygen therapy
 - Surgery to treat dead or damaged skin

Who is at a greater risk of meningococcal disease?

You're at a greater risk of developing meningococcal disease if you:



are a baby, teenager or young adult



have a spleen injury or sickle cell anemia



live in crowded places such as a college dorm, or military barrack



take medications that suppress the immune system



have visited areas outside the US, where meningococcal diseases is common

How can meningococcal disease be prevented?



- Avoid people who are sick.
- Wash hands, and avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unclean hands, if you spend time around sick people.
- Get vaccinated! Vaccine is recommended for:
 - All preteens and teens.
 - Children 2 months through 10 years old at increased risk.
 - Adults 19 years and older at increased risk.



When should you reach out to your healthcare provider?

- **Contact your healthcare provider immediately if you or your child have symptoms of meningococcal disease.**
- **Reach out to your health provider to get more information about meningococcal vaccines and your eligibility.**

Resources

1. Cleveland Clinic. Meningococcal Disease. <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/22442-meningococcal-disease>
2. Immunize.org. Meningococcal ACWY <https://www.immunize.org/vaccines/a-z/menacwy/>
3. Immunize.org. Meningococcal B. <https://www.immunize.org/vaccines/a-z/menb/>