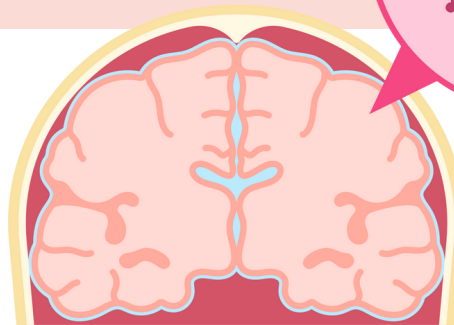


Meningococcal Disease

Cases of meningococcal disease in NJ and the US have increased. Here is what you should know:

What is it?

Meningococcal disease refers to any illness caused by bacteria called *Neisseria meningitidis*. These illnesses are often severe, can be deadly, and include infections of the lining of the brain and spinal cord (meningitis) and bloodstream.



Surveillance

Cases of meningococcal disease in the US have increased sharply since 2021 and now exceed pre-pandemic levels. People disproportionately infected include:

- Black people between the ages 30 and 60 years
- Adults with HIV infection

Infants, teens, young adults (ages 16 to 23 years old), adults 65 years+ are also at increased risk.

How does it spread?

People spread bacteria that cause meningococcal disease to others through respiratory droplets and throat secretions (saliva or spit). Generally, it takes close (kissing) or lengthy (living together) contact to spread these bacteria. People do not catch the bacteria through casual contact or by breathing air where someone with meningococcal disease has been.

Prevention

The best way to prevent meningococcal disease is to get vaccinated. CDC recommends meningococcal vaccination for

- All preteens and teens
- Children at increased risk for meningococcal disease
- Adults at increased risk for meningococcal disease



Where to get vaccinated?

- ✓ Talk with your primary doctor about what vaccine is right for you.
- ✓ Check with your local pharmacy.
- ✓ Westfield Regional Health Department offers free adult vaccines for Meningococcal (MenB & MCV4). To be eligible individuals must be non-insured or have insurance that does not provide coverage for vaccines. Proof of citizenship is not required. For more information go to our [website](#).