

# Meningococcal Disease Can be Prevented and Treated

**Vaccine appts:** 772-221-4000 #3  
Florida Dept. of Health, Martin County  
3441 SE Willoughby Blvd., Stuart

Meningococcal disease can lead to **meningitis** (infection and swelling of the lining of the brain and spinal cord) and **septicemia** (infection of the bloodstream).

**Getting Vaccinated is the Best Way to Protect Against Meningococcal Disease.**

Anyone who has been exposed or develops symptoms should see a health care provider immediately. This is a rare but potentially devastating disease.

## Meningococcal Meningitis

Symptoms can first appear as a flu-like illness and rapidly worsen. Symptoms include:

- Fever, headache, and stiff neck.
- Nausea, vomiting, light sensitivity, and confusion.

Symptoms can differ in infants and may include:

- Slow or inactivity, irritability, vomiting, poor feeding, or a bulging soft spot on their head.

## Meningococcal Septicemia

Symptoms of this blood stream infection may include:

- Fever and chills, fatigue, vomiting, cold hands and feet, rapid breathing, and diarrhea.
- Severe aches or pain in the muscles, joints, chest, or abdomen.
- In the later stages, a dark purple rash.

## How It Spreads

People do not get meningococcal disease through casual contact or by breathing air where someone with it has been. It requires close contact over a period of time, or direct contact such as kissing or sharing drinks.

## Risk Factors

Certain groups are at increased risk for meningococcal disease. Risk factors include:

- **Age:** Commonly diagnosed in infants, teens and young adults, and older adults.
- **Group Settings:** College students, particularly for those living in close quarters.
- **Certain Medical Conditions:** Certain medical conditions and medications put people at increased risk, such as people without a spleen, with blood disorders, or living with HIV.
- **Travel:** Travelers to countries where the disease is common may be at risk.

## Vaccination

There are two types of meningococcal vaccines:

- **Meningococcal conjugate** (MenACWY) vaccine.
- **Serogroup B meningococcal** (MenB) vaccine.

**Find Meningococcal Vaccines by Contacting a Health Care Provider, County Health Department, or Pharmacy.**

## Treatment

Health care providers treat meningococcal disease with a number of antibiotics. It is important that treatment start as soon as possible. If a health care provider suspects meningococcal disease, they will prescribe antibiotics right away.



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Scan the QR code to learn more about meningococcal disease and preventive vaccines or visit:

[ThePowerToProtect.org/Meningococcal](https://ThePowerToProtect.org/Meningococcal)

