

What should you do if you suspect meningococcal disease?

- If you think your child has the disease, rush them to the nearest doctor or hospital. Meningococcal disease is a medical emergency.
- Don't wait for the rash because it might not appear.
- See a doctor or nurse straight away.
- Tell the doctor or nurse your child's symptoms and that you think your child has meningococcal disease. If you can, show them this brochure.
- Get a second opinion, if you feel the need. Trust your instincts — you know your child best.
- If it is meningococcal disease, your child must receive antibiotics as soon as possible.

Early treatment saves lives.

Remember, a child with meningococcal disease will often get ill quickly and get worse fast, so check on your unwell child often, including during the night.

Where can you go for more information about meningococcal disease?

For more information about meningococcal disease, visit the Amanda Young Foundation's website:
www.amandayoungfoundation.org.au

What is the Amanda Young Foundation?

The Amanda Young Foundation was formed in March 1998 after the tragic death of Amanda Young from meningococcal disease at the tender age of 18. The Foundation aims to:

- increase awareness about meningococcal disease in the community
- develop leadership in the community through the Youth Leadership Program
- provide funding for relevant medical research projects
- provide support for survivors of the disease

The Foundation welcomes your support.

Paige Weatherspoon's Story

On 23 June 2000, Paige, who was nearly three years old, became ill with a fever and slept the whole afternoon. Her parents thought she might have a virus. Later that night Paige complained of very sore legs, and her mother noticed bruise-like spots. Alarmed, Paige's mother took her daughter to the doctor, who said Paige had a 'respiratory virus.' Back home, Paige's health quickly worsened, and the bruising spread. Her parents rushed her to hospital, but it was too late. Paige died at 3am the following day.



Tay's Story

Tay was eleven months old when he was uncharacteristically tired and vomited one evening. The following morning he was lethargic, vomiting, feverish and had very cold hands and feet. Tay's mother took him to the hospital where he was diagnosed with a viral infection. Back home he slept all afternoon and when his mother woke him that evening she discovered a tiny pinprick rash on his skin which set off alarm bells. In the 13 minutes it took to rush to hospital Tay's rash had spread all over his body. Tay was suffering from deadly meningococcal septicaemia, which had advanced to the critical stage in less than 24 hours. Thanks to his parent's decisive action and insistence on immediate attention upon arriving at hospital, Tay survived but has ongoing health issues.



This material has been developed in cooperation with the UK Meningitis Research Foundation:

www.meningitis.org

What Every Parent Must Know

Meningococcal Disease

Meningococcal disease is a rare but very serious disease that mainly targets babies and young children

Please read this brochure, it might save your child's life

Early detection and early treatment saves lives



The Amanda Young Foundation

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www.amandayoungfoundation.org.au



THE
AMANDA
YOUNG
FOUNDATION

What is meningococcal disease?

Please keep this pamphlet for reference

A rare but potentially deadly disease caused by bacteria, that can kill within hours. Every year in Australia 150-200 children aged between 0-5 years of age contract meningococcal disease. Approximately 10% of these children will die and 20% will be left with permanent disabilities, 70% diagnosed and treated effectively recover fully. 10% of the adult population carries the bacteria in their nose and throat at any one time; these are called "healthy carriers" who can infect those with immature or compromised immune systems. Meningococcal disease comes in different forms, such as meningococcal meningitis, meningococcal septicaemia or a combination of both.

Why should all parents of young children be aware of meningococcal disease?

The early symptoms are similar to mild illnesses. Because of this, misdiagnosis in medical situations is not uncommon. The disease progresses to critical stage rapidly. People of all ages can catch meningococcal disease, but most at risk are children aged 0 to 5. Many children who've died from the disease did so because they were diagnosed and treated too late. Early detection and early treatment saves lives.

Is there a vaccine?

The vaccine for **C-strain** (introduced in Australia in 2003) has been very effective, and the incidence of C-disease is now extremely rare. In 2013 a vaccine was licensed for the equally deadly **B-strain**, and made available privately through GPs at a cost.

C-Strain: For adults and children over 12 months, one vaccination provides long term protection against C-strain.

B-Strain: 3 doses will be required, at 2, 4 and 6 months of age, followed by a booster at age 12-18 months. Older infants, children, teens and adults will require 2 doses, 2 months apart.

W and Y strains: A conjugate vaccine covering ACWY is being made available to 15-19 yr olds in WA in 2017. Other age groups can purchase through GPs.

What are the symptoms of meningococcal disease?

Please keep this pamphlet for reference

Symptoms of the disease can include:

SEPTICAEMIA

**** These symptoms of septicaemia can appear first before other more serious symptoms**

- Sudden severe pain in the arms, legs, joints or stomach **
- Shivering, chills, cold hands and/or feet **
- Pale, grey or blotchy skin **
- Fever, thirst, nausea /vomiting / diarrhoea
- Feeling drowsy / loss of consciousness
- Very sleepy/tiredness and/or hard to wake up
- Refusing to feed / fretfulness
- Shrill or moaning cry
- Fast breathing and/or breathless
- Confusion or disorientation
- A rash ,spots or faint red, pink or purple pinpricks, which can develop into purple blotches over time



MENINGITIS

- Very sleepy/tiredness and/or hard to wake up
- Confusion or disorientation
- Seizures (fits)
- Fever, and/or vomiting
- A severe headache (less common in young children)
- A stiff or painful neck
- Sensitivity to light (less common in young children)

Know the symptoms of meningococcal disease and what to do if you think your child may have it.

You could save their life.

What are the symptoms in babies and toddlers?

There are many possible symptoms that babies and toddlers might have, such as:

- A fever
- Refusing to feed
- Feeling grumpy
- Not wanting to be held or touched
- A tense or bulging soft spot on the head
- A high pitched or moaning cry
- A stiff or floppy body
- A pink, red or purple rash



What are important points to know about the symptoms?

Remember:

- Symptoms differ from person to person
- Symptoms vary depending on the type of meningococcal disease
- A person might have only a few symptoms
- Symptoms might be similar to milder illnesses, such as a cold, flu or gastro, but the person is a lot sicker
- The disease can be hard to recognise at first
- A rash may or may not appear

When should you suspect meningococcal disease?

Suspect meningococcal disease if your child has some of the symptoms on this leaflet and:

- The symptoms quickly get worse (within hours) and/or
- The symptoms are more severe, or more unusual, than you'd normally expect from a cold, flu or gastro and, possibly,
- Your gut feeling is that your child is very ill