



16 August 2012

To: Students and Staff at Whitireia Performance Centre, Wellington

CONTACT WITH MENINGOCOCCAL DISEASE

A person at your centre has been diagnosed with confirmed meningococcal disease. Meningococcal disease is caused by bacteria that live in the back of the nose or throat and usually this does not cause disease.

People who live in the same house as the person have been given antibiotics. The main purpose of the antibiotics is to treat people who may be carrying the bacteria in the back of the nose and throat and stop the spread of the disease. Antibiotics to eliminate carriage of the bacteria will not stop the development of the disease if someone is already developing the illness.

Other people do not need antibiotics unless there has been very close contact. The bacteria are usually only passed from person to person in very close contact, usually in the same household, such as by kissing. It is the contact with saliva, which is important. The bacteria do not live long outside the human body. While secondary cases (i.e. a second case in a family or other close group) occasionally occur, the bacteria are not passed readily from person to person like the flu or common cold.

Meningococcal Disease can be either meningitis (infection in the linings of the brain and spinal cord) or septicaemia (infection in the blood). The disease may start with a flu like illness, and then rapidly progress to a more serious illness with fever, headache, drowsiness, vomiting, stiff neck, a skin rash like blood spots under the skin, and sensitivity to

In babies or children the illness may be more difficult to identify. Other symptoms in babies or children may include a fever, high pitched crying, generally being unsettled, refusing drinks or feeds, vomiting, being sleepy or floppy or hard to wake or a skin rash.

It can be very hard to tell meningococcal disease from the flu in the early stages. If you become unwell with a combination of these symptoms you should consult your doctor or After Hours Medical Centre urgently. Tell your



doctor about your contact with meningococcal disease. I suggest you take this letter with you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Barbara Eddie'.

Barbara Eddie
Public Health Nurse
for Medical Officer of Health
REGIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH
DD 570 9636
027 223 983

Further public health advice:

Service	Contact details ☎	Comment
Regional Public Health	Office hours (8am to 5pm) 04-570-9002 RPH After hours 04 570-9007	Most enquiries about the public health follow up are best answered by the Public Health nurse team in office hours Urgent enquiries about the public health follow up. Ask to speak to the on-call person for meningococcal disease at Regional Public Health
Healthline	0800 611 116 for free 24-hour health advice	Healthline is a free telephone health information service for all the family. The service is staffed by registered nurses who will assess your health needs, and give information and advice.
Ministry of Health	www.moh.govt.nz	Further information available on this useful website