



# KALAMAZOO COUNTY GOVERNMENT

In the Pursuit of Extraordinary Governance...

## FACT SHEET BACTERIAL MENINGITIS

<p><b>What is bacterial meningitis?</b></p>	<p>Bacterial meningitis is disease caused by bacteria that results in an infection of the membranes of the brain and spinal cord. It can be caused by any bacteria, but the three most common agents are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Haemophilus influenzae</i> type B (HIB)</li> <li>2. <i>Neisseria meningitidis</i></li> <li>3. <i>Streptococcus pneumoniae</i></li> </ol>
<p><b>How is it spread?</b></p>	<p>The way it spreads is different with each type of bacteria. Some forms of bacterial meningitis are contagious; some are not. Usually it is spread by direct contact including respiratory droplets from the nose and throat (kissing, coughing, sharing food and drinks, etc). Most people will not become seriously ill. Close contacts with prolonged exposure are more likely to become very ill.</p>
<p><b>What is the incubation period?</b></p>	<p>It takes about 1-10 days after contact for symptoms of full body infection to occur.</p>
<p><b>What are the early signs?</b></p>	<p>Early signs vary but may include sudden fever, intense headache, nausea and vomiting, stiff neck, and rash.</p>
<p><b>What about contacts?</b></p>	<p>Follow-up is required only for intimate and family contacts. If symptoms appear, parents should contact their family doctor. People who may have a depressed immune system should also check with their physician.</p>
<p><b>How long is the person contagious?</b></p>	<p>As long as the bacteria are present in the nose/throat. No longer contagious after 24 hours of appropriate antibiotic treatment.</p>
<p><b>When is it okay to return to school/childcare?</b></p>	<p>It is okay to return after recovering, with antibiotic treatment, and a doctor's okay.</p>
<p><b>Other Important Information</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children under 5 should receive HIB &amp; pneumococcal immunizations.</li> <li>• Practice good handwashing and other hygiene measures.</li> <li>• Remind children not to share food/drink and/or eating utensils, water bottles, etc.</li> <li>• Disinfection: routine sanitary practices.</li> <li>• Children ages 11-19 years should receive a meningitis (MCV4) immunization. Especially recommended for all students prior to college entry.</li> </ul>

*This fact sheet is not intended to replace the advice of your physician. Parents should contact their healthcare provider if they have concerns regarding their child's health. If you have general questions, you may contact a Kalamazoo County nurse at 373-5022 or 373-5267.*

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## HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

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