

Meningococcal Disease

What is meningococcal disease?

- Meningococcal disease is any illness caused by the bacteria *Neisseria meningitidis*.
- It is the leading cause of bacterial meningitis in children 2-18 years of age in U.S.
- Meningococcal disease can be very serious, even life-threatening in 48 hours or less.
- The two most severe and common illnesses caused by meningococcal bacteria include;
 - Meningitis - an infection of the fluid and lining around the brain and spinal cord
 - Septicemia - a bloodstream infection

What are the symptoms?

- Symptoms of meningococcal disease are similar to influenza (flu) and may include:
 - Sudden onset of a high fever
 - Headache
 - Stiff neck
 - Nausea
 - Vomiting
 - Increased sensitivity to light
 - Rash
 - Confusion
 - Severe aches and pain in the muscles, joints, chest or belly

How does meningococcal disease spread?

- Meningococcal disease is spread person to person by sharing respiratory secretions, through kissing or coughing, close or lengthy contact, and among people who share a room or live in the same household.
- Anyone can get meningococcal disease, but teens and college freshmen who live in residence halls are at increased risk.
- Some people can “carry” meningococcal bacteria in their nose and throat without getting meningococcal disease, but can still infect other people.
- Most cases of meningococcal disease are spread by people who “carry” the bacteria with no symptoms, appear to be random, and not linked to other cases.
- Meningococcal outbreaks can occur in communities, schools, colleges, prisons, and in other high risk populations.

Where can I find more information?

- Ask your doctor.
- Call the Alabama Department of Public Health, Immunization Division, at 1-800-469-4599.
- Go to cdc.gov and type meningococcal disease in SEARCH box.



Alabama Department of Public Health

Immunization Division, 201 Monroe St, Montgomery, AL 36104

1-800-469-4599 www.adph.org/imm 2/29/16

ACT #2014- 274

1 SB75
2 156308-2
3 By Senator Irons
4 RFD: Health
5 First Read: 14-JAN-14
6 PFD: 01/08/2014



1 SB75

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3
4 ENROLLED, An Act,

5 To require local school systems to provide
6 information to parents and guardians of students in grades six
7 through 12 on meningococcal meningitis disease and its vaccine
8 whenever other health information is provided.

9 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

10 Section 1. This act shall be known and may be cited
11 as the Jessica Elkins Act.

12 Section 2. (a) If a local board of education
13 provides information on immunizations, infectious diseases,
14 medications, or other school health issues to parents and
15 guardians of students in grades six through 12, then all of
16 the following information about meningococcal meningitis
17 disease and its vaccine shall be included:

18 (1) A description of causes, symptoms, and means of
19 transmission.

20 (2) A list of sources for additional information.

21 (3) Related recommendations issued by the federal
22 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

23 (b) The State Department of Education, in
24 cooperation with the Department of Public Health, shall
25 develop and make available the information about meningococcal

1 meningitis disease and its vaccine to local school systems as
2 required under subsection (a) in an efficient manner that may
3 include posting the information on its website.

4 Section 3. This act shall become effective on the
5 first day of the third month following its passage and
6 approval by the Governor, or its otherwise becoming law.