

Meningococcal Meningitis



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مركز الأمراض الإنتقالية
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Meningococcal Meningitis

Introduction

Meningococcal meningitis is a bacterial infection. Areas with serious risk are predominantly in the sub-Saharan Africa (meningitis belt) from Senegal in the west to Ethiopia in the east (26 countries). Out breaks can happen in mass gathering events like during Hajj pilgrimages.

The disease transmits by sneezing, coughing or direct contact with respiratory secretions (droplets transmission).

Meningitis also can be caused by other types of bacteria, viruses and fungi.

The Illness

Asymptomatic (no symptoms) carriage is possible

Symptoms of meningitis usually include one or more of the following:

- Sudden onset of fever
- Headache
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Photophobia (intolerance of light)
- Neck pain
- Skin rash

If one or more of the symptoms above occurs, seek medical attention immediately.

Treatment

As soon as meningitis is suspected, treatment with antibiotics should be started.

Antibiotic prophylaxis may be needed for close contacts of patients confirmed with meningitis.

Vaccination

Vaccines to protect against multiple strains of meningococcal meningitis for travelers are available. It is licensed for individuals two years and older.

Vaccination should be considered for the below:

- Travel to regions with current outbreak of meningitis where close and prolonged contact with local population is anticipated, particularly in overcrowded areas.
- Travel to a high endemic region for individuals with immunodeficiency including asplenia.
- Travel to the Hajj and Umrah pilgrimage.

The vaccine is available at the traveler Clinic at the Communicable Diseases Center

Recommendations for Travellers

Respiratory infections are often difficult to prevent but following basic personal hygiene etiquette when coughing and sneezing can help.

Avoiding over crowded areas such as busy markets and local transport may also reduce risk of exposure but may not always be practical.

Pilgrims travelling to Saudi Arabia for Hajj are required to have a valid certificate of vaccination against the disease for visa purposes