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FACTS...

Sedgwick County Health Department

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MENINGITIS

What is meningitis?

Meningitis is a vaccine-preventable, bacterial infection of the bloodstream and the thin lining covering the brain and spinal cord.

What are the symptoms of meningitis?

Common symptoms of meningitis in anyone over the age of 2 years are high fever, headache, and stiff neck. Other symptoms may include nausea, vomiting, sensitivity to light, confusion, and sleepiness. In newborns and small infants, the classic symptoms of fever, headache, and neck stiffness may be absent or difficult to detect, and the infant may only appear slow or inactive, be irritable, have vomiting, and feeding poorly. As the disease progresses, patients of any age may have seizures.

How soon do symptoms appear after infection occurs?

Symptoms of meningitis may appear 2-10 days after exposure, but usually within five days.

How long is the diagnosed person contagious?

The duration varies among individuals and with the treatment used.

How is meningitis spread?

Bacteria is spread through the exchange of respiratory and throat secretions (i.e., coughing, kissing). Fortunately, none of the bacteria that causes meningitis are as contagious as things like the common cold or the flu, and they are not spread by casual contact or by simply breathing the air where a person with meningitis has been. Many people carry this particular germ in their nose and throat without any signs of illness, while others may develop serious symptoms.

How can I get more information on Meningitis

For more information on Meningitis or any other health issues, call the Sedgwick County Health Department at 660-7300.

Or visit the Sedgwick County website at www.sedgwickcounty.org.

How is meningitis treated?

Bacterial meningitis can be treated with a number of effective antibiotics. It is important, however, that treatment be started early in the course of the disease, as meningitis can be fatal.

How can you prevent meningitis?

Presently there is a meningitis vaccine routinely recommended for all children 11 - 12 years old. It is highly recommended for students living in dorms or in close quarters and those traveling to parts of the world where the disease is common. Additional protection against bacterial meningitis is provided through other vaccines. Adults, adolescents and children should be sure to receive age appropriate vaccinations based on the recommended immunization schedules.

Meningococcal vaccine can be obtained from the Sedgwick County Health Department. Local physicians may also have the vaccine.



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