

# Meningitis and septicaemia

## It can happen to anyone

Meningitis and meningococcal septicaemia (blood poisoning) are serious diseases that can affect anyone at any time. Fortunately, most young people in the UK have already had the MenC vaccine, but if you haven't or can't remember, getting vaccinated is a good way to protect yourself. But remember, vaccines can't prevent all forms of meningitis and septicaemia.

### What are the signs and symptoms?

Many of the early signs - vomiting, fever, aches, general tiredness and headaches - are also signs of less serious illnesses like colds and flu or even a hangover but someone with meningitis or septicaemia will become seriously ill in a matter of hours. Symptoms can appear in any order and not everyone gets all of the symptoms.

The main signs and symptoms of meningitis include: fever, very bad headache, vomiting, stiff neck, dislike of bright lights, rash, confusion, delirium, severe sleepiness, losing consciousness, seizures

### How is meningitis spread?

The bacteria that cause these diseases are spread by coughing, sneezing and intimate kissing. It can also be spread by sharing drinks. Outbreaks tend to occur where people live or work closely together, such as university halls of residence.

### The glass test

Press the side of a glass firmly against the rash so you can see if it fades under pressure. If it doesn't fade call 999 or go to A&E immediately.

### Go straight to the Accident and Emergency Department

If you are feeling very ill, get help anyway, even if the rash fades or doesn't appear at all. It can be harder to see a rash on darker skin.

Source: [www.meningitisnow.org](http://www.meningitisnow.org)

### Who can help?

- GP
- Parent/carer

### Contact

- [www.meningitisnow.org](http://www.meningitisnow.org)
- [www.nhs.uk/conditions/meningitis](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/meningitis)