

Meningitis Update:

Currently two Cornell students are recovering from confirmed bacterial meningitis. Cornell and the Tompkins County Department of Health are working closely together to provide prophylaxis treatment to those who came in close contact with these students.

Meningococcal disease is rare, affecting about 3,000 persons annually in the United States. However, it is an extremely dangerous disease with a 10%-15% mortality rate. Below is an outline, provided by the Gannett Health Services at Cornell, describing what 'contact' with an infected individual might include. You will also find links to sites providing further information regarding meningococcal disease. In addition, the TC3 Health Center will be glad to answer any questions you may have at this time.

Here's what you need to know if you are concerned about a possible exposure to someone who has been diagnosed with meningococcal disease:

- The Tompkins County Health Department works closely with the patient (when possible), friends, and family members to identify everyone who may have had very close contact with the patient.
- "Very close contact" means sharing the same drinking utensil (cup, glass, can, or jug), eating from the same piece of pizza or other foods, sharing the same eating utensil, sharing the same cigarette, sharing the same chapstick or lipstick, and kissing.
- Close contacts should be evaluated by a health care professional and treated as soon as possible with preventive or "prophylactic" antibiotics, such as ciprofloxacin ("cipro"). This is given in one dose.
- Even those close contacts who have had the meningococcal vaccine should take the preventive antibiotic. The vaccine provides an important measure of protection, but is effective against only four of the five subtypes of meningococcal disease. (The vaccine preventable subtypes account for 70 to 80% of the cases in the college age population.)
- People who have been in the same room but have not had this kind of contact with the patient would not be considered to be at elevated risk and would not need preventive antibiotic.
- People who have had "second hand contact" (i.e., have been in close contact with someone who has been in close contact with the patient) also are not considered to be at elevated risk.

Links for further information:

http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo/meningococcal_g.htm

<http://www.gannett.cornell.edu/healthAtoZ/healthAdvice/meningococcal.html>

http://www.health.state.ny.us/diseases/communicable/meningococcal/fact_sheet.htm

Meningococcal vaccine:

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/vis/downloads/vis-mening.pdf>