

Meningitis

This information is based on the national guidance: [Health protection in children and young people settings, including education](#).

Meningitis describes the inflammation (swelling) of the membranes covering the brain and spinal cord, it can be caused by a variety of viruses and bacteria.

Symptoms of meningitis:

- High temperature
- Severe headache
- Photophobia - eye discomfort in bright light
- Neck stiffness
- Non-blanching rash - if a glass tumbler is pressed firmly against a septicaemic rash, the rash will not fade and will be visible through the glass. **This requires urgent medical attention.** Please note rashes may look different depending on skin tone - visit [NHS online](#) for more information.
- Vomiting
- Drowsiness or difficulty waking up
- Cold hands and feet
- Seizures or fits
- Confusion

When should children with symptoms of meningitis stop coming to school, nursery, or college?

Children and staff should not come to their education setting until they have recovered from meningitis, once they have been treated and recovered, they can return to their education setting. The UKSHA Health Protection Team will have carried out the appropriate contact tracing and risk assessments.

What should we do in the education setting?

Seek medical advice immediately if meningitis is suspected.

Inform the UKSHA Health Protection Team (0344 2254 524) of a single case of meningitis in your setting, and if there are 2 cases in 4 weeks.

Encourage children and staff to receive all the vaccinations that they are eligible for:

- The MenACWY vaccine protects against 4 strains of the meningococcal bacteria which particularly affect teenagers and university students. This is routinely offered to children aged 13-15 in school. Young people born after 1st September 1996 may have missed their MenACWY vaccine and are eligible up until their 25th birthday. It is particularly important for students going to university for the 1st time to check if they have had MenACWY.
- Meningitis B and C, Pneumococcal and Hib vaccinations all help to prevent different types of meningitis and are included in the routine childhood immunisation schedule.
- Meningitis can sometimes occur as a side effect of measles or mumps and the MMR vaccine protects against this.



Teaching resources:

Early years - [hand and respiratory hygiene](#)

KS1 - [hand and respiratory hygiene](#)

KS2 - [hand and respiratory hygiene and vaccinations](#)

KS3 - [hand and respiratory hygiene and vaccinations](#)

KS4 - [hand and respiratory hygiene and vaccinations](#)

