

“Meningococcal disease and me” quiz

Please answer TRUE or FALSE (T or F) for the following questions.

- ___ 1. Immunization protects us from diseases.
- ___ 2. Meningococcal disease is caused by a virus.
- ___ 3. Meningococcal disease can always be cured by medicine.
- ___ 4. The brain is affected by meningococcal disease.
- ___ 5. Some people who have meningococcal disease get very sick and may even die.
- ___ 6. Sometimes people who have meningitis infections are not sick and don't even know that they have the disease.
- ___ 7. Meningococcal disease can be spread by forgetting to wash your hands after using the bathroom.
- ___ 8. Meningococcal disease can be spread when people are in the same classroom with someone who is infected.
- ___ 9. Meningococcal disease is the leading cause of bacterial meningitis in adolescents and young adults.
- ___ 10. Sharing drinks and food is OK.
- ___ 11. A vaccine that prevents meningococcal disease is currently available.
- ___ 12. You probably won't get sick after your needle but your arm may get sore.

Answers to “Meningococcal disease and me” Quiz

1. TRUE

Immunization protects us from diseases like measles, mumps, polio, tetanus, whooping cough, hepatitis B and meningococcal disease.

A person’s natural immune system fights off infections and diseases. Vaccination against diseases helps the immune system fight these diseases and reduces the possibility of spreading the diseases from person to person **Being immunized protects you and the people around you from sickness and possible death .**

2. FALSE

Meningococcal disease is caused by bacteria known as *Neisseria meningitides* (also called meningococcus). Five types of Neisseria bacteria (A, B, C, Y and W-135) cause almost all meningococcal infections. In rare instances the bacteria overcome the body’s natural defences and cause serious illness, including meningitis (infection of the lining of the brain) and septicaemia (widespread infection involving the blood and multiple organs).

3. FALSE

Antibiotics can help cure most infections caused by bacteria. Although meningococcal disease can be treated with antibiotics, the disease can progress very quickly and can be very serious and lead to death even with the correct antibiotics..

4. TRUE

Meningococcal disease can infect the bloodstream and it can infect the lining around the brain and spinal cord causing meningitis. Meningitis is the most common form of meningococcal infection.

5. TRUE

Some people with meningococcal disease get very sick and a few may die. Some people recover completely if detected and treated with antibiotics early enough. The disease can progress very quickly and damage many organs in the body. Sometimes the bacteria will cause organs to stop working and lead to death within 6 to 12 hours after the first sign of illness.

6. TRUE

Up to 10% of healthy people carry meningococcal bacteria in their nose or throat and are not sick or aware they have this bacteria. The bacteria may live in the nose and throat of carriers for weeks or months. The bacteria will usually spread from someone who is healthy.

7. FALSE

Meningococcal bacteria are NOT spread by failing to wash one's hands. These bacteria are spread by direct contact with respiratory and oral secretions (saliva and or nasal

mucus), or in other words “swapping spit” with an infected person. To prevent the spread of meningococcal disease, objects that have come in contact with another person’s mouth should not be shared.

8. FALSE

You cannot be infected with meningococcal bacteria just from being in the same classroom at school or on the same bus with someone who is infected. It is spread from an infected person to another person through close, direct contact and through such activities as kissing, coughing and sneezing. It can also be spread through saliva when sharing items such as cigarettes, lipstick, food or drinks and musical instruments with mouthpieces.

9. TRUE

Anyone can get infected with meningococcal bacteria but some people are at higher risk for developing meningococcal disease. It is most common in children under 5, adolescents and young adults.

10. FALSE

Meningococcal disease can be spread from person to person through saliva when sharing items such as food or drinks. Do not share eating utensils, cups or water bottles.

11. TRUE

There are several vaccines to protect you from meningococcal disease. Starting in September 2009, Toronto Public Health (TPH) will offer grade 7 students a meningococcal vaccine called MENACTRA®. This vaccine protects against four types of preventable meningococcal disease including types A, C, Y and W-135. Prior to September 2009, grade 7 students received the meningitis C vaccine which only protects against type C meningococcal disease. MENACTRA® provides broader protection against meningococcal disease than the meningitis C vaccine.

12. TRUE

It is rare for people to become sick after getting the needle, but some do get a sore and red arm for a couple of days. You can put a cool cloth or compress on your arm if this happens to you. Some people may feel tired or have a headache or mild fever, but most feel better in 1-2 days.

More serious reactions (such as a high fever, difficulty breathing, swelling of the mouth or face, hives or rashes) occur within 15 minutes of the needle should be reported to the student’s parents/legal guardians if the reaction occurs while the student is in school. All students will be observed for 15 minutes by the clinic nurses. Parents/legal guardians should notify their family doctor and the Toronto Public Health Immunization Information Line at 416-392-1250 of serious reactions.