

WILLINGBORO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

WILLINGBORO, NEW JERSEY 08046-2847



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Dear *[Parent, Teacher, School Administrator, Community Resident, etc]*:

We have been notified by the Burlington County Health Department that one of our students has been diagnosed with meningococcal disease. While this can be upsetting, **the chance of your child or you also becoming ill with this disease is very small.** Public health and school personnel are working together to protect the health and safety of all students and staff. The following information will help you understand the situation.

- Meningococcal disease is an infection caused by bacteria. The disease is spread by close contact with someone who has the illness. Examples of close contact would be kissing, or sharing cups, bottles, or eating utensils with the ill person, or coming in contact with coughs or sneezes of the ill person. Being in the room with the ill person is not considered close contact.
- Taking antibiotics can prevent meningococcal disease from developing in persons who are identified as close contacts.
- Even after exposure to the bacteria, it is very unusual to get infected with the illness. It takes 2-10 days before symptoms appear.
- When a person becomes ill with meningococcal disease, the symptoms may include fever, headache, nausea, vomiting, neck stiffness, and a rash. These symptoms need immediate medical attention because the disease can progress rapidly. Early treatment with antibiotics is important.
- As a general rule, you can help prevent the spread of infectious diseases by washing hands frequently, covering your nose and mouth with tissues when coughing or sneezing, and not sharing eating utensils, toothbrushes, cups, drinking glasses, or water bottles.

If you need more information, please contact your family doctor or the Burlington County Health Department at 609-265-5533. Please do not call the school for information on the illness, or for an update on the infected student's condition. School/company administrators will work closely with public health officials to keep you informed of the situation.

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.