

## Is there a vaccine available for Bacterial Meningitis?

Group	Recommended Vaccination
Infants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hib (<i>Haemophilus influenzae</i> type b) at 2, 4, and 12-15 months as a part of their routine shots.</li> <li>• Pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (<i>Streptococcus pneumoniae</i>) at 2, 4, 6 and 12-15 months of age as a part of their routine shots.</li> </ul>
Adolescents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meningococcal vaccine at 11 - 12 years of age.</li> <li>• Meningococcal vaccine at entry into high school (approx. age 15) if not vaccinated at 11- 12 years of age.</li> </ul>
College Students	(especially those at higher risk, such as those living in dormitories) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meningococcal vaccine if unvaccinated.</li> </ul>
Overseas Travelers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check to see if a meningococcal vaccine is recommended for travel to their destination.</li> </ul>
Healthy Adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One pneumococcal vaccine after the age of 65 years.</li> </ul>
Adults with Chronic Medical Conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May need 1-2 doses of a pneumococcal vaccine and 1 or more doses of a meningococcal vaccine. Please consult with your doctor.</li> </ul>

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH)

## Local Resources

For information on Bacterial Meningitis visit our website at:

<http://www.tulsa-health.org/community-health/epidemiology/>

or write:

Tulsa Health Department  
Planning & Epidemiology  
5051 S. 129th E. Ave.  
Tulsa, OK 74134

Other Contact Information:

Phone: 918/595-4505

Fax: 918/595-4588

E-mail: [epidemiology@tulsa-health.org](mailto:epidemiology@tulsa-health.org)

THD will:

1. Investigate some types of bacterial meningitis cases,
2. Contact close contacts of bacterial meningitis cases for antibiotic prophylaxis, and
3. Provide information on bacterial meningitis.

For more information on Bacterial Meningitis, visit:

- Oklahoma State Department of Health

(405) 271-4060

[www.health.state.ok.us/program/cdd/infec.html](http://www.health.state.ok.us/program/cdd/infec.html)

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

(888) 443-7232

[www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo/meningococcal\\_g.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo/meningococcal_g.htm)



**TULSA HEALTH**  
**DEPARTMENT**

Prepared by Planning & Epidemiology

# Bacterial Meningitis

Bacterial Meningitis is an infection of the fluid that surrounds the brain and spinal cord. This infection is caused by bacteria. *Streptococcus pneumoniae* and *Neisseria meningitidis* are the usual causes of bacterial meningitis.

In the past, *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib) was the leading cause of meningitis. That however, has changed due to the introduction of the Hib vaccine during routine childhood vaccinations.

TULSA HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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# Bacterial Meningitis

## Who is at risk for Bacterial Meningitis?

Anyone can get bacterial meningitis because the bacteria that cause this disease can be passed from one person to another.

## What are the symptoms?



Infants less than 2 years old may also show these symptoms:

- Slowness or inactivity
- Difficulty awakening
- Refusing to eat
- Irritability
- Shivering
- Difficulty breathing

As this disease progresses, people of all ages may have seizures. Meningitis can be severe, resulting in brain damage, hearing loss, or learning disabilities.

## How soon do symptoms appear?

Symptoms appear anywhere from 2-10 days after exposure (3-4 days on average) and may appear in any order.

## How is Bacterial Meningitis spread?

- Prolonged, direct contact with respiratory and throat secretions such as saliva, nasal mucus, or sputum (saliva mixed with mucus).

*Not spread by casual contact or by breathing the air where a person with bacterial meningitis has been.*

## How long is Bacterial Meningitis contagious?

- Until the bacteria are no longer present in discharges from the nose and mouth.
- Bacteria usually disappear within 24 hours after starting treatment.

## How can Bacterial Meningitis be diagnosed?

The diagnosis is usually made by growing bacteria from a sample of spinal fluid. The spinal fluid is obtained by performing a spinal tap, which is a procedure in which a needle is inserted into the lower back to collect spinal fluid. Identifying the bacteria is important so the correct antibiotic can be used to treat the disease.



**Early diagnosis and treatment are very important.**  
**If symptoms occur, see a doctor immediately.**

## What is the treatment for Bacterial Meningitis?

Antibiotics will generally be prescribed for the case and, in some instances, for close contacts of the case, such as:

- family members living in the same house, or
- people who spend a lot of time together such as close friends and/or babysitters.

*Not everyone who has been around the sick person will require antibiotics.* Antibiotics prescribed to the close contacts are called prophylaxis and are used to help prevent others from contracting bacterial meningitis. Antibiotics will only be prescribed for certain types of bacterial meningitis. The Tulsa Health Department will work to identify those close contacts needing antibiotics.

## How can it be prevented?

Bacterial Meningitis can be prevented by:

- Washing hands, especially after sneezing and coughing.
- Keeping hands and objects out of your mouth.
- Disinfecting items used by infected people; bleach is a good disinfectant.
- Not eating or drinking after other people.
- Not sharing spoons, forks, drinking straws, chapsticks, lip glosses and lipsticks.