



## Social Development Department

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Section/Unit:	Office of the Strategic Executive Director: Social Development		

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### **MENINGOCOCCAL MENINGITIS**

The MMC for Health and Social Development, Cllr Sibongile Moselelane would like to make the community aware of Meningococcal meningitis.

Meningococcal meningitis / bacterial meningitis is mainly a seasonal condition in South Africa and we are currently in the height of the season. Viral meningitis is also seasonal and usually occurs at the same time. Meningococcal meningitis is a notifiable medical condition in South Africa, meaning that all cases of suspected and confirmed meningitis in both public and private health institutions must be reported to the Department of Health.

In Gauteng Province, multi-professional rapid response teams are in place in all health districts to launch rapid case investigations and implement prevention and control measures as soon as laboratory confirmed cases are notified to the health authorities. Preventative precautions include educating the public in the need to reduce direct contact and exposure to droplet infection (using disposable paper tissues to wipe your nose and cover both nose and mouth when coughing, not sharing cigarettes and glasses and minimizing close body contact, e.g. kissing); reduce overcrowding in living quarters and workplaces, such as barracks, schools and camps. All medical staff are requested to immediately notify suspected cases telephonically to their closest health authority.

If the public takes the necessary preventive measures, seek timeous medical care for suspicious symptoms and confirmed laboratory cases and medical doctors notify health authorities timeously, severe complications and fatalities can be limited.

The facts about meningococcal meningitis

Causal agent:            Neisseria meningitidis

Transmission:        Transmission occurs through direct contact. Close contacts include:

- Household members;

- Day care centre contacts; and
- Anyone directly exposed to the patient's oral secretions, (e.g. though kissing, mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, etc.)

Incubation period: 2 to 10 days (average: 3 to 4 days)

Signs and symptoms: Meningococcal meningitis is characterized by:

- Sudden onset of intense headache;
- Fever;
- Nausea and often, vomiting;
- Photophobia; and
- Stiff neck

Neurological signs include:

- Lethargy;
- Delirium; and
- Coma and /or convulsions

Diagnosis: Meningococcal meningitis is diagnosed by isolating the bacteria from either blood or spinal fluid.

Therapy: Admission to hospital is essential. Antimicrobial therapy must be instituted as soon as possible after the diagnosis has been confirmed.

Prevention: Chemoprophylaxis must be issued to close contacts of a patient. Contacts who develop any of the above symptoms should report immediately to a casualty section of a hospital.

For any further enquiries, please contact Rina van der Grÿp at 012 358 8766

Ms Ntlogeleng Mogotsi

ACTING STRATEGIC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: HEALTH AND SOCIAL  
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On request, this document can be provided in another official language.

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