

**Mission:**

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



**Rick Scott**  
Governor

**John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS**  
State Surgeon General & Secretary

**Vision:** To be the **Healthiest State** in the Nation

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## HEALTH OFFICIALS IN BREVARD COUNTY RESPOND TO MENINGOCOCCAL DISEASE CASE

**BREVARD**— The Florida Department of Health in Brevard County (DOH-Brevard) is working with health care providers, parents and administrators to respond to a death of a child due to suspected meningococcal disease while at the Brevard Juvenile Detention Center. Meningococcal disease is a very serious infection of the blood or membranes around the brain (meningitis). The disease is contagious and most common in infants, adolescents and young adults.

“We are working closely with officials at the Brevard Juvenile Detention Center to determine all close contacts of this child and provide preventive medication to those who may be impacted,” said Dr. Heidar Heshmati, DOH-Brevard director. “Our hearts go out to the family and friends of this child.”

DOH-Brevard and officials with the detention facility have provided information to parents of the other children at the facility and to parents at a group home where the child also spent time regarding preventive medication that is being made available to children over the next few days. As of February 21, 2015, preventive medication was provided to 120 potentially exposed children and staff.

The bacteria responsible for meningococcal disease, *Neisseria meningitidis*, are spread through person-to-person contact, such as occurs within a household or group setting. Examples include sharing utensils, food or toothbrushes, drinking from the same cup, sleeping in the same room as the infected person (household or group room contacts), direct contact with a patient’s oral secretions, or coughing in close contact.

Symptoms of meningococcal disease may include high fever, severe headache, stiff neck, confusion, nausea, vomiting and a skin rash. People should seek medical attention immediately if their child becomes ill with any of these symptoms.

Vaccines that protect against most types of meningococcal disease are routinely recommended for adolescents beginning at 11-12 years of age.

**Florida Department of Health**

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All residents should routinely practice good hygiene such as covering their noses and mouths when sneezing or coughing; disposing of soiled tissues; not sharing utensils, glasses or toothbrushes; and washing hands after bathroom visits and before eating.

For more information, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's meningitis webpage at <http://www.cdc.gov/meningitis/index.html>.

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