



Meningococcal Infections

Management of Cases and Contacts

This APD supersedes: PAT/IC 12 v.5 – Policy for the Management of Cases and Contacts of Meningococcal Infections



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Date revised:	May 2018
Approved by:	Infection Prevention and Control Committee
Date of approval:	7 June 2018
Date issued:	26 June 2018
Next review date:	June 2021
Target audience:	Trust-wide

Amendment Form

Version	Date Issued	Brief Summary of Changes	Author
6	26 June 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Added Executive Sponsor/s on front page Updated Duties and Responsibilities Refreshed Monitoring Compliance section Added standard statement from the Educational Department to the Training section. Reference 1&3 updated 	Dr. L. Jewes IPCT
5	23 April 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy updated in line with new trust format (CORP/COMM 1 v6) Section 9 Change in prophylaxis for children Amended contact details Added Appendix 2 Equality Impact Antimicrobial therapy added 	Dr. L. Jewes IPCT
4	June 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Title change to ensure easier location on the Intranet/Internet Paragraphs re-named and re-numbered in line with (CORP/COMM 1) Page 4 – Section added on “Equality Impact Assessment” Section 5 – changes to recognition and investigation of cases Section 10 – changes to choice of antibiotic for prophylaxis Section 11 – changes on immunisation 	Dr. L. Jewes IPCT
3	June 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No changes to policy 	Infection Prevention and Control Team
2	June 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Duties, Education and Training added. Molecular diagnosis method added. Expansion of section on prophylaxis of contacts. Reference updated. Appendix 1 updated. 	Infection Prevention and Control Team

Contents

Section		Page No.
1	Introduction	4
2	Purpose	4
3	Duties and Responsibilities	4
4	Recognition and Investigation of a Case	6
5	Antimicrobial Therapy	7
6	Infection Control Precautions	7
7	Notification	7
8	Identification of Contacts and Cases Probable Meningococcal Infection	8
9	Antibiotic Prophylaxis	9
10	Immunisation	11
11	Training and Support	11
12	Monitoring and Compliance with Policy	12
13	Definitions	12
14	Equality Impact Assessment	12
15	Associated Trust Procedural Documents	13
16	References	13
Appendices		
Appendix 1	Contact Details of the Consultant in Communicable Disease Control (CCDC)	14
Appendix 2	Equality Impact Assessment Form	15

1. INTRODUCTION

This guidance should be read in conjunction with **“Guidance for public health management of meningococcal disease in the UK”**¹, published by the Health Protection Agency (HPA).

Household contacts of a patient with meningococcal infection are at a higher risk than the general population of developing the infection themselves. The risk of a second case occurring in the household is around 1%. Other close contacts, e.g. family members and girlfriends or boyfriends, are also at increased risk. Less close contacts, e.g. work colleagues and school classmates are generally not at increased risk. Medical and nursing staff are not at increased risk either, unless they have been directly exposed to secretions e.g. during resuscitation.

Meningococci (*Neisseria meningitidis*) are spread from person to person by respiratory droplets, and prolonged close contact facilitates spread. The bacteria are then carried in the nasopharynx, usually harmlessly, but with the potential to multiply and invade the bloodstream, causing septicaemia and meningitis.

It is therefore essential to identify the close contacts of a patient with meningococcal infection and to give them antibiotic prophylaxis, which will keep their own risk of infection to a minimum if they have recently acquired the infection. Prophylaxis works by eliminating meningococci from the nasopharynx before they can multiply and cause infection. Prophylaxis also aims to eliminate carriage in the pool of contacts as one of these may have been the original source of infection. Immunisation is offered to contacts of group A, C, Y and W135 meningococci, after investigations have been completed but there is no vaccine currently routinely recommended for group B strains, apart from certain high risk situations (see “Immunisation against infectious disease”)³.

2. PURPOSE

To ensure appropriate management of cases of meningococcal infection and to ensure that all measures are taken to limit spread of infection.

3. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This policy covers infection prevention and control management issues for Trust staff this includes:-

- Employees
- Volunteers
- Agency/Locum/Bank Staff
- Contractors whilst working on the Trust premises

All staff working on Trust premises, outreach clinics and community settings, including Trust employed staff, contractors, agency and locum staff are responsible for adhering to this policy, and for reporting breaches of this policy to the person in charge and to their line manager.

Chief Executive: To ensure that infection control is a core part of clinical governance and patient safety programmes. Promote compliance with infection control policies and national standards in order to ensure low levels of health care associated infections.

Board of Directors: The Board of Directors and executives, through the Chief Executive, is ultimately responsible for ensuring that systems are in place that effectively manage the risks associated with Infection Control. Their role is to support the implementation of a Board to Ward culture to support a Zero Tolerance approach to Health Care Associated Infections

The Director of Infection Prevention and Control will provide assurance to the board that effective systems are in place.

Executive Directors: An Executive Director is required to sponsor the development of any new policy and procedure. The process of Infection Prevention and Control policies is delegated to Director of Nursing, Midwifery and Quality and the Medical Director

Director of Infection Prevention and Control: Is responsible for the development of infection prevention and control strategies throughout the Trust to ensure best practice

The Infection Prevention and Control Team: is responsible for providing expert advice in accordance with this policy, for supporting staff in its implementation, and assisting with risk assessment where complex decisions are required.

Microbiologists: As part of their role provide expert advice to senior staff out of hours. They will also be responsible in alerting the IPC team of any new alert organisms and difficulties in isolation out of hours.

Occupational Health and Wellbeing Services: Trust staff with concerns about prophylaxis should contact the Occupational Health department.

Senior Nurses: are responsible for ensuring implementation within their area by undertaking regular audits in ward rounds activities. Any deficits identified will be addressed to comply with policy.

Ward and Department Managers: are responsible for ensuring implementation within their area, and for ensuring all staff who work within the area adhere to the principles at all times.

Consultant Medical Staff: are responsible for ensuring their junior staff read and understand this policy, and adhere to the principles contained in it at all times.

Chief operating officer / On-call Managers: are responsible for providing senior and executive leadership to ensure implementation of this policy, and for ensuring infection risks are fully considered and documented when complex decisions need to be made regarding capacity and patient flow.

4. RECOGNITION AND INVESTIGATION OF A CASE

Patients are usually aged between three months and thirty years, but any age may be affected. They may have septicaemia alone or septicaemia with meningitis.

Signs and Symptoms

Any of the following may occur: -

- Sudden onset of fever, confusion, drowsiness
- Petechial rash; non-blanching, may be widespread or localised.
- Maculopapular rash also occurs
- Headache, vomiting, photophobia, irritability and neck stiffness

NOTE: - septicaemia alone presents without meningitis and has a higher mortality than meningitis.

It is strongly recommended that general practitioners give I.V. /I.M. benzylpenicillin to cases of suspected meningococcal disease (i.e. meningitis with typical non-blanching rash or meningococcal septicaemia) before transfer to hospital. Rapid transfer to hospital is of paramount importance, as even minutes can make a difference to the outcome - but urgent transfer should not be delayed in order to give the antibiotics.

However, NICE² now recommends that children and young people under 16 years with suspected meningitis WITHOUT the typical rash should be transferred directly to hospital without giving parenteral antibiotics (unless urgent transfer is not possible, in which case the antibiotics should be given).

Dosages of benzylpenicillin:-

<1 year	300 mg
1-9 years	600 mg
>10 years	1.2 g

Microbiological Investigations

If the patient has had benzylpenicillin before admission, it may be difficult to grow the organism, but it is important to attempt it for, a) confirmation of the diagnosis, b) typing of the strain and decisions on vaccination, c) local and national epidemiology. Molecular methods of diagnosis are now available to diagnose and further characterise strains. The following should be routine: -

1. Blood culture. Before further antibiotics (but do NOT delay giving antibiotics).
2. EDTA blood sample (purple bottle) for meningococcal PCR (polymerase chain reaction).

3. Throat swab. As soon after admission as possible. This may be the only specimen which is positive if prior antibiotics given. However, this is only suggestive and not diagnostic of the disease.
4. CSF. For microscopy and culture if clinically indicated and if patient condition suitable. This may be tested by PCR (Film Array) if appropriate, as determined by the Microbiologist. All Paediatric samples receive PCR testing
5. Paired sera for meningococcal antibody if cultures negative. First within a week of onset, second around two weeks later.

Immunological abnormalities (e.g. complement deficiency) can predispose to meningococcal disease. This may present as recurrent infection or as infection with rare serogroups in teenagers or young children.

5. ANTIMICROBIAL THERAPY

Treatment needs to be commenced immediately if meningitis/meningococcaemia is suspected, with **Cefotaxime 2-3g qds IV**.

(If penicillin anaphylactic contact Microbiologist)

Treatment may be adjusted once sensitivities are available on discussion with Microbiologist. For meningitis of unknown cause see Trust Antibiotic Policy. Cases should be discussed with the Consultant Microbiologist.

6. INFECTION CONTROL PRECAUTIONS

1. It is recommended that patients suspected of having meningitis (including viral) or meningococcal septicaemia are isolated in a side room for the first 24 hours of antibiotic therapy. If viral meningitis is suspected then enteric precautions are to be implemented for 7 days after the onset of illness unless a non-enteroviral diagnosis can be made. This is due to the possibility of the virus being shed in the faeces.
2. Respiratory precautions including wearing a surgical face mask must be taken by staff when undertaking procedures which may result in aerosols. For meningococcal meningitis (and/or septicaemia) respiratory precautions must continue until 24 hours of appropriate (systemic) antibiotic therapy is completed.

7. NOTIFICATION

Meningitis (all causes) and meningococcal septicaemia are notifiable diseases, i.e. it is a statutory requirement that the Public Health England (PHE) is informed of each case. PHE manages the community aspect of the case, e.g. prophylaxis and vaccination if there are a large number of contacts, information to schools, enquiries from the media etc. The clinician is

required to notify PHE about all suspected cases as soon as possible. Notification should be on suspicion - it is not necessary to wait for confirmation of a result. Notification is the responsibility of the doctor treating the patient, but the Consultant Microbiologist or Infection Control Nurses can give advice on this. The doctor should telephone PHE initially, to provide information about the patient's condition, contacts during the seven days before onset, and place of work / school. (See appendix 1 for contact details). A notification form (available on the ward) must be completed and sent to PHE, which feeds this information into regional and national epidemiology centres.

Note: NOTIFICATION IS A LEGAL REQUIREMENT

8. IDENTIFICATION OF CONTACTS OF CASES PROBABLE MENINGOCOCCAL INFECTION

As soon as the patient's condition has been stabilised, the ward doctors should begin collecting information from the family about the patient's contacts during the seven days before onset of illness. For the close contacts who always need prophylaxis (see below), names, dates of birth, addresses and general practitioners should be listed as far as possible. It is also helpful to get information about the patient's school or place of work and the date they were last there.

97% of cases are sporadic but there is a small risk to people who live in the same household as a case of meningococcal disease. This is highest in the first 7 days and falls over the following 4 weeks.

For public health management of contacts, advice must be sought from PHE (details in Appendix 1)

Close contacts who always need prophylaxis (Give irrespective of vaccination status)

1. People living in the same house as the patient or who have had prolonged close contact with the case in a household type setting for 8 hours or more
2. Family members and friends who have spent time with the patient, especially "Kissing contacts". Girlfriends or boyfriends should be included.
3. Any childminder who has been looking after the patient in a domestic situation.
4. Members of staff. Chemoprophylaxis is recommended only for those whose mouth or nose is directly exposed to large particle droplets/secretions from the respiratory tract of a probable or confirmed case of meningococcal disease during acute illness until they have completed 24 hours of systemic antibiotics. This type of exposure will only occur among staff who are working close to the face of the case without wearing a mask or other mechanical protection. In practice this implies a clear perception of facial contact with droplets/secretions and is unlikely to occur unless using suction during airway management, inserting an airway, intubating, or if the patient coughs in your face.

General medical or nursing care of cases is not an indication for prophylaxis¹.

Contacts who do not usually need prophylaxis

1. Children and teachers at the patient's school (including nursery/ pre-school) or college.
2. Work colleagues.
3. Residents of nursing/residential homes.
4. Ambulance staff, nursing and medical staff, who have not been directly exposed to the patients saliva or nasopharyngeal secretions.
5. Food or drink sharing or similar low levels of salivary contact.

The ward doctor should then telephone PHE, a) to notify the case, and b) to discuss prophylaxis for the contacts. Family members are usually visiting and can be given their antibiotics on the ward. Other contacts, e.g. friends or childminders can go to their general practitioner for prophylaxis. PHE will let the GPs know.

PHE will decide whether a wider circle of contacts, e.g. at a nursery school, need to have prophylaxis. This will depend on the circumstances of the case, whether there have been any other cases which could be linked etc. The ward doctors are not involved in arranging prophylaxis for these contacts. A & E doctors should advise contacts who attend the department that they will be contacted by PHE. The Consultant Microbiologist and the Infection Control Nurses can also give advice.

Staff who require prophylaxis (see above) should obtain this from A & E but should also inform the Occupational Health Department so that this can be documented in their records

Notes

1. In the event of delayed diagnosis, PHE will arrange prophylaxis for close contacts up to four weeks after onset of the patient's illness.
2. The patient may continue to carry meningococci if treated with benzylpenicillin, in which case one of the prophylactic antibiotics should be given in addition before the patient leaves hospital. However, treatment with cephalosporins will have eliminated the organism and an additional antibiotic is not necessary.

9. ANTIBIOTICS FOR PROPHYLAXIS

The BNF should be consulted for further details of doses, contraindications and side effects.

The choice of prophylactic agents is as follows:

1. Ciprofloxacin (first-line)

Recommended for use in all age groups and in pregnancy.

It has the advantage over rifampicin in being given as a single dose and does not interact with oral contraceptives. It is given as a single oral dose;

Dosage-

Adults and children over 12 years	500 mg stat
Children 5 to 11 years	250 mg stat
Children under 5 years	30 mg/kg (up to max 125 mg)

Contraindications:

Contraindicated in known ciprofloxacin hypersensitivity. Unpredictable effect on epilepsy (but may be preferable to rifampicin if patient is on phenytoin). It interacts with several drugs, e.g. anticoagulants, antidiabetics, but a single dose is unlikely to have significant effect.

2. Rifampicin

In the absence of contraindications, this may be used in all age groups.

Dosage-

To be given twice daily for 2 days;

Babies under 1 year	5 mg/kg
Children 1 to 11 years	10 mg/kg (max 600mg)
Adults and children over 12 years	600 mg

Contraindications:

Rifampicin is not recommended in pregnancy or in liver disease. It interacts with many other drugs, e.g. oral contraceptives, anticoagulants, antidiabetics, steroids and propranolol. (See BNF for full details). Rifampicin may produce a reddish discolouration of the urine, sputum and tears. The patient should be forewarned of this. Soft contact lenses may be permanently stained.

3. Ceftriaxone

Suitable for pregnant women and people for whom rifampicin or ciprofloxacin are contraindicated. It is given as a single I.M. injection, which is painful. Side effects include diarrhoea, allergies (caution in penicillin allergy), hepatic and blood disorders

Dosage-

Children 1 month to 12 years	125 mg dose
Adults and children over 12 years	250 mg/dose

4. Azithromycin

A single dose can be advised for chemoprophylaxis for pregnant women.

Dosage-

Azithromycin 500mg stat

10. IMMUNISATION

This will be advised by Public Health England

Index case

Cases do not need additional vaccination unless they are unimmunised or partially immunised for their age according to the national immunisation schedule, are in a risk group for meningococcal disease or are part of a defined cluster where vaccination is recommended.

At-risk index cases (eg asplenia, complement-deficiency) who are unimmunised or partially immunised should be appropriately immunised. Current recommendations include the MenACWY conjugate vaccine (2 doses one month apart if aged <1 year; 1 dose after first birthday) and MenB vaccine (2 doses two months apart with a booster at 12 months for <1 year-olds, 2 doses 2 months apart for 1-10 year-olds and 2 doses 1 month apart for older children and adults)

Close Contacts

MenACWY: For confirmed serogroup A, C, W or Y infections, close contacts of any age should be offered the MenACWY conjugate vaccine, unless they are confirmed to have been immunised against the relevant meningococcal serogroup within the preceding 12 months (2 doses one month apart if aged <1 year; 1 dose after first birthday). For close contacts of MenC cases, another MenC-containing conjugate vaccine (e.g. Menitorix®, NeisVac®) would be a suitable alternative.

MenB: After a single case of confirmed or probable serogroup B infection, vaccination against MenB is not recommended for close contacts, even if the strain is identified as vaccine-preventable.

See national guidance¹ for further details.

Immunisation will be co-ordinated by Public Health England, who will advise on the type of vaccine to use. The vaccine is usually administered by the General Practitioner of the contact, who will be contacted by PHE. Immunisation is carried out in addition to antibiotic prophylaxis and is given when typing results from the Reference Laboratory are available.

11. TRAINING AND SUPPORT

The training requirements of all staff will be identified through a training needs analysis. Role specific education will be delivered by the service lead or nominated person.

Infection Prevention and Control must be included in individual Annual Development Appraisal and any training needs for IPC addressed.

12. MONITORING COMPLIANCE WITH POLICY

Monitoring	Who	Frequency	How Reviewed
The policy will be reviewed in the following circumstances:-	APD Process Group IPCT	Every three years routinely, unless: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When new national or international guidance are received. • When newly published evidence demonstrates need for change to current practice. • Action required from Root Cause Analysis Serious Incident Investigation Report 	Approved Procedural Document (APD) database Policy will be approved and ratified by the Infection Prevention and Control Committee
Compliance with policy to negate cross-infection	The Infection Prevention and Control Practitioners	Weekly	“Alert organism review” to monitor adherence with the policy.
Training needs for infection prevention and control	Ward and Department Managers Training and Education Department	Annually	Staffs Professional Development Appraisal Attendance will be captured by the via OLM system

13. DEFINITIONS

Immunisation – protects children and adults against harmful infections.

Antibiotic Prophylaxis – treatment with antimicrobials to prevent/ward off disease e.g. meningococcal infection.

14. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

As part of its development, this policy and its impact on equality, an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been conducted in line with the principles of the Equality Impact Assessment Policy CORP/EMP 27.

The Purpose of EIA is to minimise and if possible remove and disproportionate impact on employees and or patients on the grounds of race, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation or religious belief. No detriment was identified. See Appendix 2.

15. ASSOCIATED TRUST PROCEDURAL DOCUMENTS

This policy should be read in conjunction with other Trust Policies and protocols for the prevention and control of HCAI in line with the Health and Social Care Action 2008. In particular:

- Hand Hygiene Policy – PAT/IC 5
- Mental Capacity Act 2005 - PAT/PA 19
- Pathology Specimens – Collection & Handling of Pathology Specimens – PAT/IC 11
- Privacy and Dignity Policy – PAT/PA 28

16. REFERENCES

Guidance in this document is based on the following national guidance:

1. Guidance for Public Health Management of Meningococcal Disease in the UK. HealthProtection Agency Meningococcus and Haemophilus Forum. Updated February 2018
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/688835/Public_health_management_of_meningococcal_disease_guidelines.pdf
2. Management of bacterial meningitis and meningococcal septicaemia in children and young people younger than 16 years in primary and secondary care. NICE clinical guideline102. June 2010 with amendments September 2010.
<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg102>
3. Immunisation against infectious disease (“Green Book”). Public Health England. Last updated September 2016 Chapter 22:Meningococcal
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/immunisation-against-infectious-disease-the-green-book>

APPENDIX 1 – CONTACT DETAILS OF THE CONSULTANT IN COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CONTROL (CCDC)

CONTACT DETAILS OF CONSULTANT IN COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CONTROL (CCDC)

Suspected or confirmed cases of meningococcal infection must be immediately reported to the CCDC.

List of contact numbers

Public Health England (PHE) Doncaster

Public Health England (PHE) South Yorkshire

Tel: 01142 3211177

Fax: 01142 428874

Out of office hours: Contact office number and the call will be transferred to out of hours service who will contact the on call person

Public Health England (PHE) Bassetlaw

Public Health England East Midlands

Tel: 0344 225 4524

Fax: 0115 9693523

Out of office hours via EMAS

Please use the office number above and option for on call public health

APPENDIX 2 - EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

Policy	Care Group/Executive Directorate and Department	Assessor (s)	New or Existing Service or Policy?	Date of Assessment
Meningococcal Infections Management of Cases and Contacts PAT/IC 12	Corporate Nursing Infection Prevention and Control	Dr L. Jewes	Existing Procedural Document	June 2018
1. Who is responsible for this policy? Infection Prevention and Control Team				
2. Describe the purpose of the policy? To implement safe working practices within the healthcare setting.				
3. Are there any associated objectives? To ensure appropriate management of cases of meningococcal infection and to ensure that all measures are taken to limit spread of infection.				
4. What factors contribute or detract from achieving intended outcomes?				
5. Does the policy have an impact in terms of age, race, disability, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marriage/civil partnership, maternity/pregnancy and religion/belief? No				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If yes, please describe current or planned activities to address the impact 				
6. Is there any scope for new measures which would promote equality? N/A				
7. Are any of the following groups adversely affected by the policy?				
a. Protected Characteristics	Affected?	Impact		
b. Age	No			
c. Disability	No			
d. Gender	No			
e. Gender Reassignment	No			
f. Marriage/Civil Partnership	No			
g. Maternity/Pregnancy	No			
h. Race	No			
i. Religion/Belief	No			
j. Sexual Orientation	No			
8. Provide the Equality Rating of the service/ function/policy /project / strategy				
Outcome 1 ✓	Outcome 2	Outcome 3	Outcome 4	
9. Date for next review June 2021				
Checked by: Dr K. Agwuh			Date: 07 /06/2018	