

New Jersey Department of Health
Communicable Disease Service

Sample Notification Letter - Meningococcal Disease

Please consult with the LHD and/or NJDOH prior to distribution
Microsoft® Word version available upon request

[School/company letterhead]

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

We have been notified by the _____ Department of Health that one of our *[students/employees]* has been diagnosed with meningococcal disease. While this can be upsetting, **the chance of *[your child/you]* also becoming ill with this disease is very small.** Public health and *[school/company]* officials 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 **direct, close contact** with a patient's oral secretions. Examples of close contact include kissing, or sharing of cups, bottles, or eating utensils with the ill person. Being in the same room with the ill person is **not** considered close contact.
- Even after exposure to the bacteria, it is very unusual to get infected with the illness. It takes 2-10 days before symptoms appear.
- Taking antibiotics can prevent meningococcal disease from developing in persons who are identified as close contacts.
- 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 nose and mouth with tissues when coughing or sneezing, and not sharing eating utensils, toothbrushes, cups, drinking glasses, or water bottles.

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact your family doctor or the _____ Department of Health at _____ *[phone#]* _____. Please do not call *[school/business]* for an update on the *[student's/employee's]* condition. *[School administrators/employee health service]* will work closely with public health officials to keep you informed of the situation.

Sincerely,

[Health Officer - School Administrator - Nurse]