



Queensland Health

Enquiries to: Maureen Gitsham Senior Public
Health Officer Communicable
Diseases Branch
Telephone: 07 323 41808
Facsimile: 07 323 40057
File Ref: Ref. No.

Dear Doctor

Changes to Public Health Measures for Contacts of Meningococcal Disease

New *Guidelines for the early clinical and public health management of meningococcal disease in Australia* were published in October 2007. The full document is available at <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/Content/cda-pubs-other-mening-2007.htm>.

The key change in terms of public health measures is that vaccination of unimmunised household (including anyone in the same dormitory, military barracks, or hostel bunkroom) or sexual contacts is now recommended when a vaccine-preventable serogroup is confirmed in the initial case and close contact occurred in the seven days prior to the onset of the case's symptom. In such situations Queensland Health Population Health Units will advise relevant contacts to attend a health care provider promptly to receive the appropriate vaccine.

Advice will be provided by the Population Health Unit either directly to the person or to their nominated provider, identifying the person and the vaccine recommended:

- For unimmunised household or sexual contacts of meningococcal C disease, meningococcal C conjugate vaccine is indicated and providers will be able to use their current Queensland Health provided stock for this purpose.
- For unimmunised household or sexual contacts of meningococcal A, W135 or Y disease, the 4-valent meningococcal polysaccharide vaccine is indicated and will be able to be ordered when needed for this purpose from the Queensland Health Immunisation Program, as a special delivery.

The rationale for vaccination is to address the prolonged risk of secondary cases in household and sexual contacts. It should be given within 4 weeks of onset of symptoms in the index case.

Public health management of meningococcal disease under the new guidelines continues to include the provision of information to 'contacts' and clearance antibiotics for 'close contacts', as defined on page 45 of the Guidelines.

A fact sheet on meningococcal disease is available at http://access.health.qld.gov.au/hid/InfectionsandParasites/BacterialInfections/meningococcalDisease_fs.asp.

A fact sheet on antibiotic prophylaxis of meningococcal disease is available at <http://www.health.qld.gov.au/PHS/Documents/cdu/12792.pdf>.

Office
Queensland Health
147-163 Charlotte Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Postal
PO BOX 48
BRISBANE QLD 4001

Phone
07 323 41137

Fax
07 3221 7535.

Please contact your local Population Health Unit (list attached) if you require further information

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jeannette Young". The signature is fluid and elegant, with a large initial 'J' and a long, sweeping tail on the 'g'.

Dr Jeannette Young
Chief Health Officer

6 February 2008

Queensland Health Population Health Units

Southern Population Health Unit Network

Brisbane Southside Ph: (07) 3000 9148

Gold Coast Ph: (07) 5509 7222

Darling Downs Ph: (07) 4631 9888

Central Population Health Unit Network

Brisbane Northside Ph: (07) 3624 1111

Sunshine Coast Ph: (07) 5409 6600

Wide Bay Ph: (07) 4120 6000

Rockhampton Ph: (07) 4920 6989

Bundaberg Ph: (07) 4150 2780

Tropical Population Health Unit Network

Mackay Ph: (07) 4968 6611

Townsville Ph: (07) 4753 9000

Mt Isa Ph: (07) 4744 4846

Cairns Ph: (07) 4050 3600

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