

Hot Tips: Public Health Advisory #130 Date: 6/28/2022

Please copy and distribute to ALL physicians at your location.

Meningococcal Disease Outbreak

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) continues its collaboration with the Florida Department of Health to investigate one of the worst outbreaks of meningococcal disease among gay and bisexual men in U.S. history. At least 24 cases and 7 deaths among gay and bisexual men have been reported.
- Ventura County Public Health recommends gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men get a meningococcal vaccine (MenACWY), particularly if they have travelled between Florida and California. Such travel is frequent and it is likely that this meningococcus is already here in California.
- CDC stresses the importance of routine MenACWY vaccination for people with HIV, persistent complement component deficiencies, with anatomic or functional asplenia or being treated with eculizumab.

Household contacts of meningococcal cases have 500 to 800 times the rate of disease as the general population. It is fair to assume that sexual contacts of cases have a similarly high rate of transmission. Transmission occurs from person to person through droplets from the respiratory tract and requires close contact. Outbreaks among men who have sex with men (MSM) have been seen previously.

Cultures and/or PCR of blood, CSF, and occasionally petechial and purpuric lesion scrapings and synovial fluid are indicated for diagnosis. Based on epidemiology (MSM, recent travel to Florida or contact with a case), the presence of petechiae or purpura, shock, stiff neck or raised intracranial pressure and particularly in the presence of a combination of these, the clinician should empirically begin therapy with cefotaxime or ceftriaxone.

Getting vaccinated against meningococcal disease is the best way to prevent this serious illness.

This bulletin is intended to improve the public health in our county by keeping physicians and nurses informed of noteworthy diagnoses, disease trends, and other events of medical interest. Another goal of a public health department is to educate. We hope that you will use this information to increase your awareness. Please allow us to continue in our role of speaking to the press so that we may maximize the educational message to the benefit of all citizens of Ventura County.