



Macon County Public Health

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Press Release – Franklin, NC

Macon County Public Health (MCPH) has confirmed an outbreak of meningitis. Two deaths have occurred in the last three weeks; one is confirmed to have been caused by *Neisseria meningitidis*. A second death suspected to be linked to *Neisseria meningitidis* is under investigation.

At this time, and on the advice of state and local health department officials, preventive antibiotics are being provided to individuals known to have come in close contact with individuals infected with the *Neisseria meningitidis* bacteria.

Due to privacy laws we cannot disclose personal information related to any cases.

Meningococcal disease is a disease caused by a kind of bacteria known as *Neisseria meningitidis*. These bacteria can sometimes cause infection of the bloodstream, meningitis (infection of the lining of the brain and spinal cord) and other serious illnesses.

Symptoms may include the following: sudden onset of fever, severe headache, rash, stiff neck, stomach pain, nausea or vomiting. The disease progresses quickly and can be deadly.

Meningococcal is spread by direct contact with saliva such as through sharing eating utensils, foods, cigarettes and other smoking devices, kissing and providing unprotected mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. People do not catch this disease through casual contact, or by breathing air where someone with meningococcal disease has been.

As a prevention effort, children are required to receive Meningococcal vaccination at 11, 12, and 17 years of age. Adults and children should also wash their hands or use waterless, alcohol-based hand cleanser after touching their face. People should avoid sharing eating utensils, drinking cups or anything that would help the spread of nose and throat fluids.

Macon County Public Health will continue to work with the NC Division of Public Health to help contain the outbreak. The group will work with local area health care providers, first responders, funeral homes personnel, and other community groups.

If you are experiencing any symptoms, please go directly to the emergency room. If you have any questions, or think you may have been in contact with an infected individual, please call the health department at 349-2517.

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