



Date: 7<sup>th</sup> November 2014

Dear Student,

**I am writing to inform you that there has been a recent case of meningococcal disease at your university and to give you some information about the illness and about the signs and symptoms of meningococcal disease (meningitis or septicaemia).**

Meningococcal bacteria are carried in the back of the throat of about one in ten people at any one time but only very rarely cause illness. Most people who carry the bacteria become immune to them. The bacteria do **not** spread easily and only those who have had prolonged, close contact with the person with the illness are at a slightly increased risk of getting ill. As you have not been identified as a close contact there is no need for any further action.

However, it is sensible to be aware of the signs and symptoms which are given below, and detailed on the following link <http://www.meningitis.org/symptoms> of the Meningitis Research Foundation:

Meningitis

Fever

Vomiting

Severe headache

Stiff neck

Dislike of bright light

Septicaemia

Fever

Vomiting

Bruising rash

Rapid breathing

Cold hands and feet

Joint/muscle pain

**Not all these signs and symptoms may show at once**, but someone with this illness will become very ill. The illness may progress over one or two days **but it can develop very rapidly**, sometimes in a matter of hours.

Diagnosis in the early stages can be difficult. The early signs can be similar to bad 'flu' symptoms but be watchful and use your instincts. **If someone becomes ill with some of these signs or symptoms, contact the doctor urgently and ask for advice.**

There are several types of meningococcal bacteria and a vaccine is available in the UK for one of them, which is known as Group C. This vaccine is now included in the childhood vaccination schedule. If you are under 25 years and have not had this immunisation, please discuss with your GP and arrange for the vaccination.

Further general information is available from:

The Meningitis Research Foundation

[www.meningitis.org](http://www.meningitis.org)

0808 800 3344 (24 hr helpline)

The National Meningitis Trust

[www.meningitis-trust.org](http://www.meningitis-trust.org)

0808 80 10 388 (24 hr support line)

NHS Direct

[www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk)

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Yours faithfully,

Dr Rebecca Cordery

Consultant in Communicable Disease Control