



Sequatchie Valley Planning & Development Agency
Sequatchie Valley Head Start

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Dear Parent or Guardian:

A child or staff member in our program has a serious infectious illness caused by bacteria named *Neisseria meningitidis*. The bacteria can spread between persons who share breathing space or are in close physical contact. There is a medicine called Rifampin that can be taken to reduce the risk of infection in people in close contact with the ill person.

_____ Your child has been in close contact (same classroom or shared activities) with this child or staff member.

_____ Your child has not been in close contact with the ill person.

Please take these steps:

1. Call your health care provider. Tell her or him that your child is in a group program where another child or staff member has come down with a meningococcal illness. Indicate whether or not your child has been in close contact with the ill person.
2. If your child has had close contact, our health consultant may recommend that your child take the medication, Rifampin, (unless there is some reason why your child could not take this drug). Rifampin can help eliminate the germ from someone else who has been exposed. We will help your child receive Rifampin if our health consultant recommends it. Be sure to let your child's doctor know whether or not your child received Rifampin.
3. If your child has had close contact, do not return her or him to the program until the Rifampin treatment has been started.
4. Watch your child for signs of illness or a fever for the next 3 weeks. If your child becomes ill, take her or him to a doctor **immediately**, whether or not Rifampin was given. The medicine is not always 100% effective. *Neisseria meningitidis* usually caused meningitis, an infection of the coverings of the brain that is often fatal if not treated with antibiotics.
5. Remember that our program will be very watchful during the next 3 weeks. We will notify you if anyone else becomes ill.