Meningococcal meningitis - What you need to know

Q: What is meningococcal meningitis?

- Meningococcal meningitis is a bacterial infection of the covering of the brain and spinal cord.
- Meningococcal meningococcal is a very serious infection.
- Military populations in initial entry training and college students in dormitories are among the most susceptible.
- The meningococcal vaccine has dramatically decreased the occurrence of the most common types of meningococcal meningitis.
- All soldiers entering the Army receive this vaccine at the Reception Battalion.

Q: What are the symptoms of meningococcal meningitis?

- High fever
- Feeling very unwell
- Nausea and vomiting
- Severe headache
- Pain and stiffness in the neck, shoulders and back
- Skin rash (see photo)
- Discomfort when looking into bright lights

Q: How is meningococcal meningitis spread?

- Through close contact with a person who has the germs.
- Germs are carried in the throat.
- Up to 5% of the U.S. population can carry the bacteria without symptoms.

Q: What else should I know about meningococcal meningitis?

- Someone with symptoms needs to see a doctor *IMMEDIATELY!*
- Meningococal meningitis is best treated if caught early.

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