

! Meningococcal Disease

Merlin reporting code = 03630
Case report form (CRF): [Active Bacterial Core Surveillance CRF](#)
MERLIN EXTENDED DATA REQUIRED

Clinical description

Meningococcal disease manifests most commonly as meningitis or meningococemia that may progress rapidly to purpura fulminans, shock, and death. Other manifestations might be observed.

Clinical criteria for case classification

Clinical purpura fulminans in the absence of a positive blood culture.

Laboratory criteria for case classification

Confirmatory:

- Isolation of *Neisseria meningitidis* from a normally sterile site (e.g., blood or cerebrospinal fluid [CSF], or less commonly, synovial, pleural, or pericardial fluid) or from purpuric lesions
- OR
- Detection of *N. meningitidis*-specific nucleic acid in a specimen obtained from a normally sterile body site (e.g., blood or CSF) using a polymerase chain reaction (PCR).

Presumptive:

- Detection of *N. meningitidis* antigen in formalin-fixed tissue by immunohistochemistry (IHC)
- OR
- Detection of *N. meningitidis* antigen in CSF by latex agglutination.

Supportive:

- Gram-negative diplococci, not yet identified, from a normally sterile site (e.g., blood or CSF).

Case classification

Confirmed:

A person with confirmatory laboratory evidence.

Probable:

A person with presumptive laboratory evidence.

Suspect:

- Clinical purpura fulminans in the absence of a positive blood culture
- OR
- A person with supportive laboratory evidence.

Comments

Positive antigen test results from urine or serum samples are unreliable for diagnosing meningococcal disease. Sputum cultures are not considered confirmatory, as sputum is not obtained from a normally sterile site.

 **Isolates of *N. meningitidis* must be sent to the Bureau of Public Health Laboratories for determination of serogroup.**

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