

Mission:
To protect, promote & improve the health
of all people in Florida through integrated
state, county & community efforts.



Rick Scott
Governor

John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS
State Surgeon General & Secretary

Vision: To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

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**WORLD MENINGITIS DAY OPPORTUNITY
TO FOCUS ON IMPORTANCE OF VACCINATION**

TALLAHASSEE—April 24 is World Meningitis Day and the Florida Department of Health is working to raise awareness about meningitis, emphasize the importance of vaccination and provide support to those dealing with the consequences of the disease. The department strongly encourages all Floridians to get routine vaccinations to prevent the most severe types of meningitis.

“Vaccination remains the best defense against meningitis,” said State Surgeon General and Secretary of Health Dr. John Armstrong. “Receiving routine childhood, adolescent and adult vaccinations can prevent the most severe types of meningitis.”

Meningitis is an inflammation of the covering of the brain and spinal cord that is most commonly caused by viruses and bacteria. The bacteria responsible for the disease are spread through close person-to-person contact, such as occurs within a household. Examples include kissing, sharing utensils or toothbrushes, drinking from the same cup, sleeping in the same room as the infected person (household contacts), direct contact with a patient’s saliva or coughing in close contact.

Bacterial meningitis is rare in the United States, as most children and adolescents routinely receive vaccines. In 2003, the meningococcal disease vaccine became a requirement for all Florida college students residing on-campus. Since this legislation, the number of meningococcal disease cases in Florida has been reduced by half.

Prevention through routine vaccination is the most effective way to reduce risk. However, washing hands, avoiding close contact with ill persons, covering coughs and sneezes, cleaning and disinfecting high touch surfaces, and staying home when you’re sick will also reduce the risk of spreading infections. The symptoms of meningitis include fever, headache, sensitivity to light, stiff neck, and altered mental status and can develop rapidly over a matter of hours. If you or a loved one develops these symptoms, it is important to seek medical treatment immediately.

For more information, please visit: www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/vaccine-preventable-disease/meningococcal-disease/index.html.

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