



### **What is bacterial meningitis?**

- Swelling of the membranes around the spinal cord or brain caused by a bacteria

### **What are symptoms that could occur?**

- Fever
- Severe headache
- Vomiting/nausea
- Stiff neck and back
- Confusion
- Extreme weakness
- Bulging soft spots on a baby's head
- Coma

Individuals who have any of the above symptoms need to see a physician right away

### **How is it spread?**

- Spread by intimate or direct contact with nose or throat discharges from an infected person, which includes kissing, sharing eating utensils, lip gloss/stick, cigarettes, or by contact with any fluids from the body of the infected person, such as saliva
- Bacterial meningitis is more common in infants and children, and adults weakened by illness, drugs or old age

### **How is it diagnosed and treated?**

- Physician evaluation and laboratory analysis
- Treated with antibiotics specific to the type of bacteria

### **How can bacterial meningitis be prevented?**

- Avoid sharing eating utensils, coming in contact with saliva, (either thru secretions or via shared eating utensils), lip gloss/stick, straws, glasses, cigarettes or kissing
- Frequent hand washing and disposal of tissues in trash containers
- Routine childhood immunizations, especially against Hib
- Vaccination is recommended for students entering college, especially those who will be living in dormitories
- Medication may be prescribed for high risk contacts only.

### **Should the sick individual be isolated?**

- Yes, away from other people until treatment has started and the physician determines the individual is not contagious

### **When can the individual return to the general population?**

- Following physician recommendation and when the individual is feeling well

### **Should facilities do special cleaning?**

- No. The bacteria cannot live for more than a few minutes outside the body, so special cleaning is not necessary. Routine cleaning with EPA approved products is recommended.

### **Are there reporting requirements?**

- **IMMEDIATELY** notify the Health Department of suspected or confirmed cases at **257-1017**

### **If I have any other questions, whom can I contact?**

- Call the Genesee County Health Department, 257-1017