

## **Galveston County Health Advisory - Probable Bacterial Meningitis**

The Galveston County Health District received a report about a La Marque Middle School student who passed away this weekend (February 14, 2009). Although lab reports do not identify the organism, the clinical picture is consistent with bacterial meningitis.

The Health District would like to advise physicians about bacterial meningitis. It is an acute bacterial disease characterized by sudden onset of fever, intense headache, nausea, stiff neck and photophobia. A petechial rash with pink macules or occasionally vesicles may be observed. According to CDC, *Neisseria meningitidis*, *Streptococcus pneumoniae* and *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib) cause more than 75% of all cases of bacterial meningitis and 90% of bacterial meningitis in children. The gold standard of diagnosis is recovery of the organism from sterile site, primarily cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) or blood (prior to starting antibiotics).

The Health District would like to remind the medical community the importance of identifying and providing appropriate antibiotics to close/intimate contacts of a patient with bacterial meningitis. Close or intimate contacts are considered household members; child care center contacts and persons directly exposed to patient's oral or nasal secretions (e.g., by kissing, [sharing utensils](#), mouth to mouth resuscitation, endotracheal tube intubation or management).

According to CDC, Rifampin, ciprofloxacin, and ceftriaxone are all acceptable antimicrobial agents for chemoprophylaxis of close/intimate contacts when within 2 weeks of exposure. For more information regarding bacterial meningitis or meningococcal disease access the following web link:

<http://www.cdc.gov/meningitis/index.htm> or  
<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/rr/rr5407.pdf>

Please immediately report all suspect ( and/or confirmed ) cases to Galveston County Health District Epidemiology Services at 409.938.2322.

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