

# **TEHAMA COUNTY HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Second Confirmed Case of Meningococcal Disease**

Tehama County Health Services Agency has confirmed that there is a second case of meningococcal infection in Tehama County. A six-year old patient was hospitalized at U.C. Davis with the disease, but has since been released to home and is recovering there. Public Health is still actively involved in this case investigation and contact follow-up. "Our hearts go out to the families of the children affected", states Tehama County Health Officer, Dr. Richard Wickenheiser. "Public Health is working closely with state health officials and the Tehama County Department of Education to prevent the further spread of this disease."

Meningococcal disease is passed from person to person by close contact. Close contact means living with or having intimate contact with a person. People in the same household and persons working in the same setting as a patient are considered close contacts. Close contacts can also include anyone who shared oral secretions, such as kissing or sharing foods, drinks, water bottles, cigarettes, lipstick, etc. The close contacts of the child in this case have already been identified and treated with antibiotics by Public Health.

For persons who have not had close contact with a victim, the risk of infection is extraordinarily low and approaches that of the population at large. However, all parents are advised to be alert for signs of meningococcal disease in their children. Most people complain of stiff neck, fever and headache. These symptoms can develop over the course of several hours or take as long as one to two days. There can also be a rash that does not go away with pressure. Other symptoms may include nausea, vomiting, discomfort in looking at bright lights, confusion and sleepiness. Newborns and infants may not have a stiff neck, but may appear slow or inactive, irritable or simply stop acting normally. As the disease progresses, patients of any age may have seizures. If any of these symptoms should develop, parents should take their child immediately to a physician or the emergency room to be evaluated for possible meningococcal disease. Antibiotic treatment of the disease is usually successful, especially if it is started early.

To reduce the spread and the risk of this communicable disease, Dr. Wickenheiser recommends that adults and students avoid intimate contact and NOT share food, drinks, lip balm etc. In addition, Tehama County Public Health has available the meningococcal vaccine, which protects against four of the five major meningococcal serotypes, including the Type C variety responsible for the two cases in Tehama County. This vaccine is available to children and young adults who

are 11 years of age or older at the regularly scheduled immunization clinics at Tehama County Public Health.

Immunization Clinics:     Public Health, Red Bluff, 1860 Walnut Street  
                                  Wednesdays from 9:00 to 11:00 and from 5:00 to 6:00  
                                  (530) 527-6824

                                  Public Health, Corning, 1600 Solano  
                                  Tuesdays from 4:00 to 6:00  
                                  (530) 824-4890

For more information, please contact Tehama County Health Services Agency, Public Health Division, at the numbers listed above or at 1-800-655-6854.

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