

What about the rash?

- A rash that does not fade under pressure (see 'The glass test' below) is a sign of meningococcal septicaemia.

- The rash can start as a few small spots anywhere on the body and can spread quickly to look like fresh bruises.

- The spots are more difficult to see on darker skin. Look on paler areas of the skin or under the eyelids.



Septicaemic rash



The glass test

Spots or a rash that do not fade under pressure will still be seen when the side of a clear drinking glass is pressed firmly against the skin.

A fever with spots or a rash that do not fade under pressure is a medical emergency.

If someone is ill or is obviously getting worse, do not wait for the spots or rash to appear. They may appear late or not at all.

What to do if you suspect meningitis or septicaemia

- If you are on Hajj or Umrah, make sure you get immediate medical attention.
- Describe the symptoms carefully and say that you think it might be meningitis or septicaemia.
- If you have seen a doctor but are still worried, don't be afraid to ask for medical help again.
- If you are in the UK, contact your GP or go to the nearest accident and emergency department.

How are the germs spread?

The germs that cause bacterial meningitis usually live harmlessly in the back of the throat. Most of us will carry them at some time without becoming ill, and they help us to build up natural protection against the disease. However, the germs can sometimes invade the body and cause disease.

The germs are passed from person to person through coughing, sneezing and intimate kissing. They spread more easily in crowded places, such as during pilgrimage.

Most cases of meningitis happen alone, but when there is a case of meningococcal disease there is a small chance that more cases can happen. If you have had close contact with someone who has meningitis, you might need antibiotics to reduce the risk of more cases developing. In the UK, the local health protection unit identifies close contacts and will explain what action needs to be taken.

Treating meningitis

Bacterial meningitis and septicaemia need urgent hospital treatment with antibiotics. Recognising and treating the disease early will improve the chance of survival and a good outcome.

After meningitis and septicaemia

Although some people who have had meningitis or septicaemia make a good recovery, many are left with serious after-effects and complications. These include deafness, blindness, loss of limbs, learning difficulties and behavioural problems. The effect of the disease may also cause people to lose their jobs and their relationships to break down.

When someone has meningitis, their family and the people around them will also be affected. For more information on after-effects and the help we can offer, call our Freephone helpline on **0800 028 18 28** or visit our website at **www.meningitis-trust.org**.

The Meningitis Trust

We, the Meningitis Trust, are a registered charity set up in 1986 by families who had been affected by meningitis. We are committed to increasing understanding of the disease and providing specialised professional services to anyone who has been affected. These services offer emotional, practical and financial support to help people rebuild their lives.

Here are some of the ways we do this.

24-hour helpline – a Freephone service, staffed by nurses, with Language Line translation service available, providing information and support seven days a week

Home visits – trained staff offer information and support in people's homes

Art therapy – allows children and young adults to use art to help them express how they are feeling in safe and confidential surroundings

Professional counselling – confidential counselling for people who have had meningitis and their families

Financial support grants – to help fund specialist training, equipment, activities, respite care (to give carers a break from caring) and funeral costs

One-to-one contacts – putting people affected by meningitis in touch with volunteers who have also experienced the disease

This is only made possible by donations from people like you, as we rely almost entirely on voluntary support to fund our work.



helpline staffed by nurses

0800 028 18 28

www.meningitis-trust.org

Calls from BT landlines are free. Other service providers and mobile rates may vary.

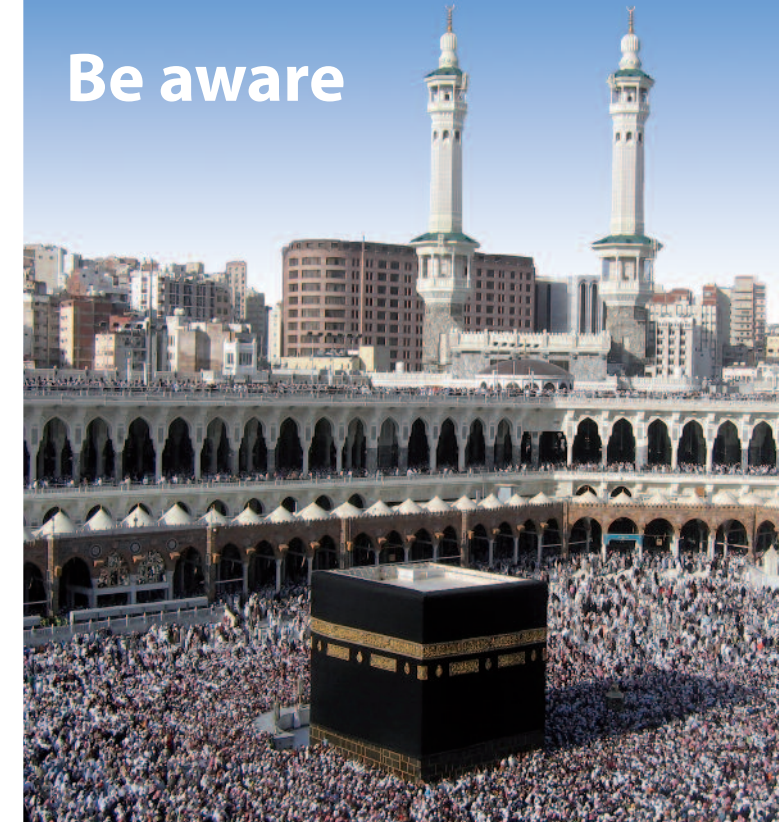
The Meningitis Trust
Fern House, Bath Road
Stroud, Glos, GL5 3TJ, UK
Phone: 01453 768000
Fax: 01453 768001



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Meningitis Hajj and Umrah

Be aware



Approved by



During the joyous time of pilgrimage to Hajj or Umrah, millions of people from all over the world come together in Makkah, Saudi Arabia.

Because of the crowded conditions at ceremonies, accommodation sites and on public transport, those people (pilgrims) are at extra risk of contracting infectious diseases, including meningitis.

This leaflet provides important information about bacterial and viral meningitis. It explains the facts behind the fear, why it is important to be vaccinated, and how to recognise the signs and symptoms of this life-threatening disease.

Meningitis can affect anyone of any age, or ethnic background. Knowing the signs and symptoms, and taking the appropriate action, can save lives.

We are here to answer any questions you might have and to support anyone affected by the disease. We use the Language Line service, which allows us to communicate in over 100 languages. We can also provide translated documents about the disease.

Can meningitis be prevented?

Vaccination is the only way to prevent meningitis. There are effective vaccines to prevent some types of meningitis. These vaccines have dramatically reduced the number of cases in the UK. Vaccines that protect against meningococcal group C, Hib and pneumococcal meningitis are offered as part of the routine childhood immunisation programme in the UK.

There are different groups of meningococcal bacteria that can cause disease. All pilgrims going to Hajj or Umrah must have been vaccinated against groups A and W135 to protect themselves and their community. You need to have a valid vaccine certificate (quadrivalent ACWY) from your doctor to get a visa from the Saudi embassy.

Adults need to have the vaccine at least three weeks before they travel. **Young children may need more than one dose of a vaccine, so allow enough time before travelling.**

Always check that your vaccinations are up to date before you travel.

There is no vaccine to prevent disease caused by meningococcal group B, which is the most common cause of bacterial meningitis in the UK. **It is important that you know the signs and symptoms.**

It is vital to plan ahead for your pilgrimage:

- Allow plenty of time for vaccination before you travel.
- Make sure you carry the emergency contact information provided by your travel specialist, the Association of British Hujjaj UK or the British Consulate in Jeddah.
- Keep this leaflet with you to remind you of the signs and symptoms of meningitis.

What is meningitis?

Meningitis is inflammation of the layers that surround and protect the brain and spinal cord. The most common germs that cause meningitis are viruses and bacteria.

Viral meningitis is usually a mild disease, but sufferers can be left with headaches, tiredness and memory loss.

Bacterial meningitis is life-threatening and needs urgent medical attention. Most sufferers will recover, but many can be left with serious disabilities and one in 10 will die.

Many different bacteria can cause meningitis. In the UK and other areas of the world, including Saudi Arabia and sub-Saharan Africa, meningitis is commonly caused by meningococcal bacteria.

What is meningococcal septicaemia?

Meningococcal bacteria can cause both meningitis and septicaemia (blood poisoning). Together these conditions are known as meningococcal disease.

Meningococcal septicaemia can happen with meningitis or on its own.

Meningococcal disease develops very quickly. It is important to know the signs and symptoms so that you can recognise it and get medical help quickly.

Meningitis and septicaemia can affect anyone at any age, but babies and young children are most at risk.

What are the signs and symptoms?

Early signs and symptoms can be similar to common illnesses and can include fever, headache, feeling sick, vomiting, muscle pain and cold hands and feet.

The common signs and symptoms of meningitis and septicaemia are listed opposite.



For a copy of our symptoms card, which you can keep in your purse or wallet, please call 0800 028 18 28.

Common signs and symptoms of meningitis and septicaemia

Children and adults

Meningitis

- Fever
- Severe headache
- Vomiting
- Dislike bright lights
- Stiff neck, muscle pain
- Drowsy, difficult to wake
- Confusion and irritability

Septicaemia

- Fever, cold hands and feet
- Vomiting
- Severe muscle pain, not being able to stand
- Spots or rash (see 'The glass test' over the page)
- Stomach cramps and diarrhoea
- Drowsy, difficult to wake
- Confusion and irritability

Babies and toddlers may also have pale blotchy skin, rapid breathing, an unusual cry, dislike being picked up, and be difficult to wake.

Symptoms can appear in any order and some may not appear at all.

Meningitis and septicaemia often happen together. Make sure you know all the signs and symptoms.

Trust your instincts

If you suspect meningitis or septicaemia, get medical help immediately.