



Cumbria Teaching Primary Care Trust

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Dear Parent/Guardian,

This letter is to draw your attention to the recent increase in serious meningococcal disease cases in the Allerdale area.

Meningococcal disease is not always easy to detect, which is why it is important for everyone to have basic understanding of what to look out for, and what to do if they recognise the symptoms.

If you notice the symptoms of meningococcal disease in someone, it is important to seek medical help immediately.

Meningococcal infection is caused by the bacterium (germ) meningococcus. It can result in meningitis (inflammation of the brain lining) and/or septicaemia (blood poisoning). Infection can occur at any age, though most cases are recorded in children under four years old. Teenagers up to age 19 are the next most vulnerable group.

Early symptoms of the disease may include:

- A rash that does not fade when pressed with a glass (due to bleeding under the skin).
- Sudden onset of high fever
- A severe and worsening headache (without any other obvious cause)
- Severe neck stiffness
- Dislike of bright lights (photophobia)
- Very cold hands and feet
- Drowsiness that can deteriorate into a fever


Babies with meningococcal disease tend to be irritable when picked up and have a high pitched cry, stiff body and jerking movements.

Further information on meningococcal infection is available from:

- The Meningitis Trust on 0845-6000-800 or at www.meningitis-trust.org
- Meningitis Research Foundation on 0808-800-3344 or www.meningitis.org
- NHS Direct on 0845-4647

Also enclosed with this letter is an information leaflet which provides answers to common questions.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nigel Calvert', written in a cursive style.

Dr Nigel Calvert
Associate Director of Health Protection