

Please see message below from our colleagues in Public Health.

Dear all,

The [UK Health Security Agency \(UKHSA\)](#) is continuing to investigate an outbreak of meningococcal disease (likely group B meningococcal strain) in Kent with 13 cases confirmed since 13 March. Sadly, this includes two people who are known to have died.

Investigations have confirmed some of the cases visited Club Chemistry in **Canterbury** between 5 and 7 March prior to becoming unwell. UKHSA's health protection team is working closely with the nightclub and partners including the [University of Kent](#) to limit the spread. More information is available in the following link: [Cases of invasive meningococcal disease notified in Kent - GOV.UK](#). Advice has been issued to 16,000 staff and students at the University of Kent, where antibiotics are also being offered to those who need them.

Meningitis and septicaemia

Meningitis is a serious condition where the protective layers around the brain and spinal cord become inflamed. Septicaemia is when the bacteria enter the bloodstream and cause blood poisoning. These conditions can progress quickly and can happen to anyone, so it is important to know the symptoms and risks.

Symptoms

Early symptoms, which may not always be present, include:

- fever
- a rash that doesn't fade when pressed with a glass
- severe and worsening headache
- stiff neck
- vomiting and diarrhoea
- joint and muscle pain
- dislike of bright lights
- very cold hands and feet
- seizures
- confusion/delirium
- severe sleepiness/difficulty waking

Early symptoms can often be confused with other illnesses such as a cold, flu or hangover, and students are particularly at risk of missing the early warning signs.

If you or anyone you know develops any of these symptoms, seek medical help immediately by contacting a GP, calling NHS 111 or dialling 999 in an emergency.

Knowing the signs and taking early treatment can be lifesaving.

Young people going on to university or college for the first time are particularly at risk of meningitis because they newly mix with so many other students, some of whom may carry the bacteria at the back of their nose and throat without any symptoms.

There are numerous strains of the meningococcal infection. The MenACWY vaccination gives good protection against MenA, MenC, MenW, and MenY. It is routinely offered to teenagers in school Years 9 and 10. However, this vaccine does not protect against all forms of meningococcal infection. Other strains such as MenB can circulate in young adults, which is why it's important to know how to spot the symptoms of meningitis and septicaemia as early detection and treatment can save lives.

Further information on meningococcal disease:

- [Meningitis - NHS](#)
- [The Meningitis Research Foundation](#)
0808 800 3344 (24 hours)
- [Meningitis Now](#)
0808 80 10 388 (9am to 8pm)

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