



## Resources

### Places to go for more information

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC)

[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

National Institute for Health & Care Excellence (NICE)

[guidance.nice.org.uk](http://guidance.nice.org.uk)

National Meningitis Association

[www.nmaus.org](http://www.nmaus.org)



## How can I help?

Children recovering from meningitis have a diverse set of needs. Some will experience hearing loss, others will experience academic problems, and others may develop seizures. Students may need additional services including hearing screenings, or academic supports. Visit

[interventioncentral.org](http://interventioncentral.org) for specific interventions you can use.



Vartzelis, G., Vasilopoulou, V., Katsioulis, A., Hadjchristodoulou, C., & Theodoridou, M. (2011). Functional and behavioral outcome of bacterial meningitis in school-aged survivors. *Pediatrics International*, 53, 300-302.

# Bacterial Meningitis



## Facts & Resources



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## Q & A



# What is Bacterial Meningitis?

Bacterial Meningitis is the infection and inflammation of the meninges in the brain. While the introduction of the *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib) vaccine has significantly decreased the number of cases of bacterial meningitis, around 500 people die from the disease each year in the United States. Those who do not die from the disease are at risk for hearing loss, academic delays, and/or brain damage (CDC, 2012). Thus, even though few people have bacterial meningitis, when a child becomes infected it can be very serious, or even deadly.

Hearing loss is one of the biggest long-term effects of pediatric bacterial

meningitis. In the UK, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence recommends screening all children for hearing loss within six weeks of recovery from bacterial meningitis (NICE, 2010). Although more difficult to notice, many survivors experience trouble learning at school. Some studies have shown that behavior also changes as the child grows up, while other studies show that behavior is no different from other kids the same age. Even though behavior changes are debated, most researchers agree that survivors of bacterial meningitis are at-risk for learning difficulties (Vartzelis et al., 2011).

### How do people get bacterial meningitis?

Bacterial meningitis is passed on much like the flu or a cold, but it is not nearly as contagious.

### What are risk factors for contracting bacterial meningitis?

- Preexisting immunodeficiency disorders
- Overcrowded living conditions
- Penetrating head injuries

### How does a doctor diagnose bacterial meningitis?

It is typically diagnosed by examining the cerebral spinal fluid (CSF) that is collected via a spinal tap.

### Can I do anything to prevent getting bacterial meningitis?

Yes! Be sure to

- Get vaccinated and remember to get booster shots!
- Wash hands regularly
- Cook food thoroughly