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FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH IN OKEECHOBEE COUNTY ADVISES ON MENINGOCOCCAL DISEASE AND VACCINES IN FLORIDA

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Tallahassee, Fla. – The Florida Department of Health (FDOH) is responding to an outbreak of meningococcal disease in Florida. **However, it can be prevented and treated. Getting vaccinated is the best way to protect against meningococcal disease.**

Thus far, the number of cases identified in 2022 surpasses the 5-year average of meningococcal disease cases in Florida. FDOH epidemiologists are investigating each case as well as contacting people with potential or direct exposure to known cases to provide them with information and treatment options.

The following groups should consider vaccination with a meningococcal conjugate (MenACWY) vaccine during this outbreak:

- [College and university students;](#)
- [Immunocompromised individuals;](#)
- People living with HIV;
- [Men who have sex with men;](#)
- People in any groups listed above who received their MenACWY vaccine more than 5 years ago.

Find meningococcal vaccines, including the MenACWY vaccine, by contacting a health care provider, county health department, or pharmacy. FDOH Okeechobee offers meningococcal vaccines. For more information, visit the FDOH Okeechobee website <https://okeechobee.floridahealth.gov/> or call 863-462-5800.

This is a serious disease caused by bacteria called *Neisseria meningitidis*. Fortunately, these bacteria are not as contagious as germs that cause the common cold or flu. People do not catch the bacteria through casual contact or by breathing air where someone with meningococcal disease has been. It requires close contact over a period of time, or direct contact such as kissing or sharing drinks.

Early symptoms of the disease include fever, headache, stiff neck, nausea, vomiting, light sensitivity, confusion, and rash. Anyone who has been exposed or develops symptoms should be evaluated by a health care provider immediately. This is a rare but potentially devastating disease.

For more information about meningococcal disease, please visit the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website](#) or the [FDOH website](#).