

Know the Symptoms Please keep this for reference

- Meningitis and septicaemia can be hard to recognise at first. Symptoms can appear in any order, but the first symptoms are usually fever, vomiting, headache and feeling unwell, just like many mild illnesses. The 'red flag' symptoms often appear earlier than meningitis symptoms like neck stiffness and dislike of light, and before the more serious symptoms.
- Not everyone gets all of these symptoms.
- Septicaemia can occur with or without meningitis.

	Septicaemia	Meningitis
Fever and/or vomiting		
Severe headache		
Limb/joint/muscle pain <small>(sometimes stomach pain/diarrhoea)</small>		
Cold hands and feet/shivering		
Pale or mottled skin		
Breathing fast/ breathless		
Rash <small>(anywhere on the body)</small>		 Not present in all cases
Stiff neck		 Less common in young children
Dislike of bright lights		 Less common in young children
Very sleepy/ vacant/ difficult to wake		
Confused/ delirious		
Seizures (fits) may also be seen		

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Other symptoms in babies:


- Tense or bulging soft spot on their head
- Refusing to feed
- Irritable when picked up, with a high pitched or moaning cry
- A stiff body with jerky movements, or else floppy and lifeless

What should I do if I am worried about someone who is ill?

Trust your instincts. Someone who has meningitis or septicaemia could become seriously ill very quickly. Get medical help immediately if you are worried about someone who is ill.


Tumbler Test

If someone is ill and gets a rash, do the 'Tumbler Test'. Check for spots over the whole body.




If a glass tumbler is pressed firmly against a septicaemic rash, the marks will not fade. You will be able to see the marks through the glass.

IF THIS HAPPENS GET MEDICAL HELP IMMEDIATELY.



This rash can be harder to see on dark skin, so check for spots especially on paler areas like palms of the hands, soles of the feet, the stomach, inside the eyelids and on the roof of the mouth.



Watch out for tiny red or brown pin prick marks, which can change into larger red or purple blotches or blood blisters.

Photograph Courtesy Dr A Riordan

Remember, a very ill person needs medical help even if there are only a few spots, a rash that fades or no rash at all.

Freefone 24 hour helpline



080 8800 3344 (UK)

1800 41 33 44 (Republic of Ireland)

Know the Symptoms

Meningitis and septicaemia are very dangerous and can kill in hours.

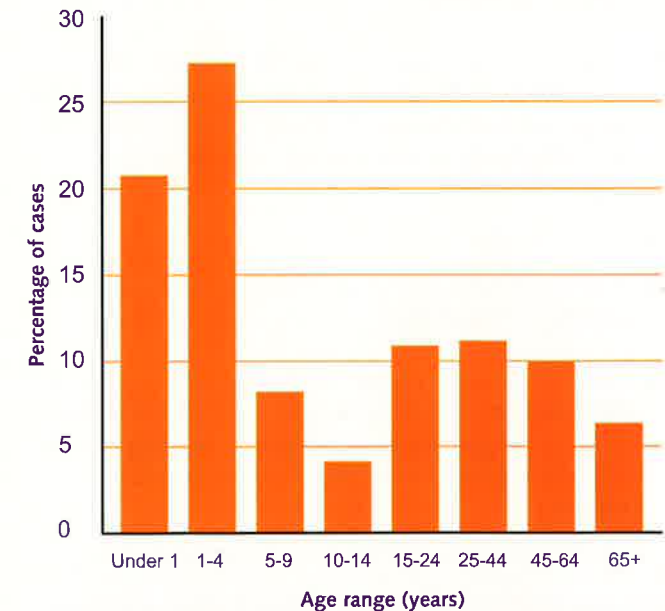
Meningitis means swelling of the lining around the brain and spinal cord. Septicaemia is blood poisoning caused by the same germs. They can occur together or separately.

People who are faced with meningitis and septicaemia have to act fast to save a life - **a race against time.**

Questions and Answers

Q1 Only children and college students get it. **True/False?**

A1 **False.** Babies, children and young people are most at risk, but anyone of any age can get meningitis and septicaemia, as the graph shows.



Typical distribution of bacterial meningitis and meningococcal septicaemia by age

Questions and Answers *continued*

Q2 You won't get it if you've had a meningitis vaccine. **True/False?**

A2 False. Meningitis vaccines give excellent protection, but can't prevent all forms. You still need to know the symptoms. For more information call the charity's **Freefone** 24 hour helpline 080 8800 3344 (UK) 1800 41 33 44 (Republic of Ireland) or visit our website www.meningitis.org

Q3 If you feel ill, you should wait and see if you get a rash. **True/False?**

A3 False. The rash is mostly seen with septicaemia, but it might not appear until someone is already very ill, and in some cases may not appear at all.

Q4 You always get a stiff neck, and can't stand the light. **True/False?**

A4 False. Neck stiffness and dislike of bright lights are symptoms of meningitis but do not appear in every case and are unusual in young children. They are **not symptoms of septicaemia** - the more dangerous form.

Q5 With meningitis and septicaemia you always get ill quickly. **True/False?**

A5 False. The main type of meningitis and septicaemia usually comes on very fast and the person will get worse very quickly. However, there are some types where the onset of illness is slower.

Trust your instincts. If you are worried about someone who is ill, get medical help immediately.

For more information call
Meningitis Research Foundation's
Freefone 24 hour helpline



080 8800 3344 (UK)
1800 41 33 44 (Republic of Ireland)
or visit our website www.meningitis.org

Meningitis Research Foundation's vision is a world free from meningitis and septicaemia. That's why we fund vital scientific research into the prevention, detection and treatment of the diseases.

We raise awareness of the symptoms and the need for urgent medical help by campaigns and leaflets like this. In addition to this we also offer written and audio information in 18 languages, details of which are on our website. Information is given free of charge.

The charity also offers support to people affected by meningitis and septicaemia.

If you would like to help in the fight against meningitis and septicaemia, please call your local office. Thank you.

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Race Against Time
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