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## Meningococcal disease alert

Public health officials are warning people to be alert to the early symptoms of meningococcal disease after an 18 year man was treated for the condition. He is in a stable condition at Campbelltown Hospital.

South Western Sydney Local Health District's Director of Public Health, Dr Leena Gupta, said this was a reminder for people to be aware of the signs and symptoms of meningococcal disease.

"Anyone with symptoms must take action fast and go to their doctor. Early treatment with antibiotics can lead to a complete recovery in many cases," Dr Gupta said.

The first symptoms may include pain in the legs, cold hands and feet and abnormal skin colour.

Other symptoms can include:

- high fever
- headache
- neck stiffness
- dislike of bright lights
- nausea and vomiting
- a rash of reddish-purple spots or bruises
- drowsiness

A rash of fine red spots or larger bruises is a sign that infection is progressing and that you need urgent medical attention. However, the rash does not always appear.

Dr Gupta said that not all symptoms of meningococcal disease may be present at once.

Meningococcal disease is an infection that causes meningitis (inflammation of the lining of the brain and spinal cord) and severe blood infection. Most cases are seen in infants, young children, teenagers and young adults, although people of any age can be infected.

The meningococcal C vaccine for children and young adults protects against only one strain of the disease, the C strain. Other vaccines are available for other strains but are not in the current routine immunisation schedule for children so it is important to be on alerts for symptoms, even for people who have been immunised.

For a fact sheet visit: [www.health.nsw.gov.au/factsheets/infectious/meningococcal.html](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/factsheets/infectious/meningococcal.html) or go to [www.health.nsw.gov.au](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au).