MENINGOCOCCAL DISEASE
(Neisseria meningitidis)
Last revised May 11, 2011

I. IDENTIFICATION
A. CLINICAL DESCRIPTION: A very serious, acute disease caused by infection with the bacterium Neisseria meningitidis. This bacterium is often associated with meningitis and/or sepsis. Signs and symptoms include: sudden onset of fever, intense headache, stiff or rigid neck, photophobia, petechial or purpuric rash, nausea and vomiting.

B. REPORTING CRITERIA: Clinical diagnosis or laboratory confirmation.

C. LABORATORY CRITERIA FOR CONFIRMATION: At least one of the following:
   • Isolation of Neisseria meningitidis from a normally sterile site (e.g., cerebrospinal fluid [CSF], blood, joint, pleural, pericardial fluid, or another normally sterile site). Isolation from urine, sputum, abscesses or pharyngeal swabs does not meet the case definition.
   • Visualization of Gram-negative diplococci on Gram stain of CSF or blood.
   • Molecular detection of N. meningitidis by polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test, performed on CSF only.
   • Positive antigen test for N. meningitidis performed on CSF only.

D. WISCONSIN CASE DEFINITION: A clinically compatible illness that is laboratory confirmed.

II. ACTIONS REQUIRED / PREVENTION MEASURES
A. WISCONSIN DISEASE SURVEILLANCE CATEGORY I: Report IMMEDIATELY BY TELEPHONE to the patient's local health department upon identification of a confirmed or suspected case. The local health department shall then notify the state epidemiologist immediately of any confirmed or suspected cases. Within 24 hours, submit a case report electronically through the Wisconsin Electronic Disease Surveillance System (WEDSS), by mail or fax using an Acute and Communicable Disease Case Report (F-44151), or by other means.

B. EPIDEMIOLOGY REPORTS REQUIRED:
   • Electronically – Report through WEDSS, including appropriate disease-specific tabs OR
   • Paper Copy – Acute and Communicable Diseases Case Report (F-44151) along with:
     • Vaccine History and Serogroup Worksheet

C. PUBLIC HEALTH INTERVENTIONS:
   In accordance with Wisconsin Administrative rule DHS 145.05, local public health should follow the methods of control recommended in the current edition of Control of Communicable Diseases Manual, edited by David L. Heymann, published by the American Public Health Association.
Protocol for Disease Management and Investigation of Contacts
For further details regarding control measures, refer to the Invasive Meningococcal Disease Management Protocol.

III. CONTACTS FOR CONSULTATION
B. BCDER / COMMUNICABLE DISEASE EPIDEMIOLOGY SECTION: (608) 267-9003
C. WISCONSIN STATE LABORATORY OF HYGIENE / BACTERIOLOGY: (608) 263-3421

IV. RELATED REFERENCES
