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Private and confidential

18/03/2026

Our ref: 201167057

Dear Student,

Re: Important: Meningococcal Disease Information Following Cases in Canterbury Christ Church University (Please Read All Pages)

You may have heard that a student associated with Canterbury Christ Church University is being treated for confirmed meningococcal disease.

This letter provides an update and gives you some further information about the disease and actions you can take to reduce risk.

There remains no reason for you to stay away from university, unless you have been directly advised otherwise. The most important immediate action is taking a single dose of an antibiotic if you are identified as a close contact.

What you need to do

Meningococcal infection doesn't spread very easily. The bacteria can only be passed to others after a long period of close contact, for example living with someone in shared accommodation, through prolonged kissing or sharing vapes.

There are two important actions that students can take to support management of this incident and help protect themselves. These are 1) be aware and alert to the signs and symptoms of invasive meningococcal disease; and 2) come forward for preventive antibiotic treatment if you are eligible and not already done so.



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Contact tracing and provision of preventative antibiotics

Specialists at UKHSA are interviewing affected individuals and their families to help identify all close contacts and arrange antibiotics to limit spread.

In addition, investigations have confirmed that some of the cases associated with the current outbreak of meningococcal disease in Kent visited Club Chemistry in Canterbury between 5 to 7 March prior to becoming unwell. UKHSA is working closely with the nightclub and partners to limit the spread. UKHSA is advising **anyone who visited Club Chemistry on 5 March, 6 March or 7 March** to come forward for post exposure preventative antibiotic treatment as a precautionary measure.

This can be collected from the following sites:

- Gate Clinic, Kent and Canterbury Hospital, Ethelbert Road, Canterbury, CT1 3NG - 8.30am to 7.30pm
- Westgate Hall, Westgate Hall Road, Canterbury, Kent, CT1 2BT. 8.30am to 7.30pm
- Thanet Community Health Hub, Northwood Road, Broadstairs, CT10 2WA - Open daily from 8.30am to 8pm (last patient 7.30pm)
- Vicarage Lane Clinic, Ashford, TN23 1NJ Open: Wednesday, 18 March, 9am to 4pm and Thursday, 20 March, 8.30am to 7.30pm.
- Senate Building at University of Kent, CT2 7NZ –9am to 8pm

The clinics are expected to be open until at least Friday 20 March. Please check [here](#) for updated opening details.

If students that need preventative antibiotics have already gone home from university for Easter and are unable to travel to one of the local sites, they can have them prescribed by their GP.



Further information about invasive meningococcal disease

Meningococcal disease (meningitis and septicaemia) is an uncommon but serious disease caused by meningococcal bacteria. The onset of illness is often sudden and early diagnosis and treatment with antibiotics are vital. While meningococcal disease can affect all ages, recent outbreaks have shown that older children, teenagers and young adults, particularly those in shared settings such as schools, colleges and universities, are more likely to be affected.

How invasive meningococcal disease spreads

Meningococcal infection doesn't spread very easily. The bacteria can only be passed to others after a long period of close contact, for example with living with someone in shared accommodation, through prolonged kissing or sharing vapes.

People may be offered preventive antibiotics if they have had significant, close contact with someone with meningococcal disease in the last 7 days.

Signs and symptoms

Meningococcal disease can progress rapidly, so it's essential that students are alert to the signs and symptoms of meningococcal meningitis and septicaemia. You should seek urgent medical help if you develop any symptoms of meningococcal disease.

High temperature	Rapid breathing
Vomiting or diarrhoea and stomach cramps	Joint or muscle pain
	Cold hands and feet
Severe headache	Pale blotchy skin
Stiff neck	Confusion and/or irritability
Dislike of bright light	Drowsiness or difficult to wake
Rash or bruising rash	Seizures or fits



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One or more of these symptoms may develop and they can appear in any order.

Meningococcal disease does not spread easily, and outbreaks of this size are rare. If you have not been contacted directly by UKHSA the risk to you is low. You can continue to attend University as normal unless you have been directly advised otherwise by your local health protection team.

Vaccination

There are several types of meningococcal bacteria that can cause meningitis. The current outbreak is caused by Meningococcal B (MenB).

Teenagers are routinely offered the MenACWY vaccine, which protects against four other types of meningitis: A, C, W, and Y. This usually happens in school Years 9 and 10. If someone missed this vaccination at school, they can still get it up until their 25th birthday. It's especially important to get it before starting university or college, where infections can spread more easily. You can get it by contacting your GP.

However, the MenACWY vaccine does not protect against MenB, and there is no routine MenB vaccination programme for young adults. MenB vaccination is only routinely offered to children under two, meaning children born before 2015 (when this programme was introduced) have not been vaccinated as part of their routine immunisation schedule. Because of this, it's important to know the signs and symptoms of meningitis and septicaemia—spotting them early can save lives.

Finally, make sure that you stay up to date with all your routine vaccinations, as these offer important protection.

In some outbreaks, vaccination against meningococcal group B (MenB) is used as an additional protective measure, particularly when there is evidence that vaccination can reduce the risk of later cases in affected groups. UKHSA continues to review all information to identify and assess appropriate prevention and control action.



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The most important steps to take at this stage are to be alert to the signs and symptoms of invasive meningococcal disease and encourage uptake of antibiotic treatment to those who are eligible.

For more information, visit the **NHS website**

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/meningitis/> or see the information available from two charities who offer free support via their websites and helplines:

The Meningitis Research Foundation

www.meningitis.org

Helpline UK 080 8800 3344

Meningitis Now

www.meningitisnow.org

Helpline 0808 80 10 388

or helpline@meningitisnow.org