

ROBERT P. ASTORINO
County Executive

Sherlita Amler, M.D.
Commissioner of Health

ATTENTION

Public Health Alert

DATE: February 10, 2017

SUBJECT: **Meningitis Confirmed in a Mount Vernon woman**

A 34-year-old Mount Vernon Woman died Feb. 7. Her cause of death was confirmed to be meningococcal (Neisseria) Meningitis.

The Westchester County Department of Health has been in contact with her friends and family to identify close contacts.

In an abundance of caution, the Westchester County Health Department recommends that anyone who may have had close contact with her between January 25 and February 6 should be assessed as soon as possible to determine if they should receive preventive antibiotic treatment.

Close contact means you exchanged saliva by sharing drinks, eating utensils, food, mouth-to-mouth kisses, lipstick, tobacco or marijuana cigarettes, or shared nasal or oral secretions.

Casual contact, such as talking with someone, is not of concern.

If preventive treatment is indicated, it should be given as soon as possible and no later than 14 days after the exposure. If you believe you were exposed, please contact your primary care physician for antibiotic preventive treatment. Your physician can call the Westchester County Department of Health with any questions or if you are treated.

Should your primary care physician be unavailable, Montefiore Mount Vernon Hospital, New York Presbyterian/Lawrence Hospital in Bronxville and Montefiore Medical Center in the Bronx have agreed to provide the antibiotic preventive treatment.

Meningococcal meningitis is a severe bacterial infection of the blood stream or meninges (a thin lining of the brain and spinal cord) caused by the meningococcus germ, which is spread by close contact with nose or throat discharges of an infected person.

Symptoms can include high fever, headache, vomiting, stiff neck and rash and appear most often within five days after exposure but can appear from two to 10 days after exposure.

Should you have any questions regarding this, please contact the health department during regular business hours at 813-5159. During weekends, holidays and after hours, please call 914-424-0210 to reach a public health nurse.