

Department of Health

IMPORTANT PUBLIC HEALTH COMMUNIQUE: Increased incidence of invasive diseases – iGAS, meningococcal disease, IPD

18 January 2023

Key points:

1. An increased incidence of invasive diseases including invasive group A Streptococcus infection (iGAS), meningococcal disease and invasive pneumococcal disease (IPD) has recently been observed in Queensland.
2. Clinicians should be alert for signs and symptoms of sepsis and invasive disease when evaluating patients with a compatible clinical illness.
3. The overall risk for the general population is low, however Queensland Health continues to keep a watching brief given recent international and interstate concerns.

Who is most at risk?

People most at risk of these invasive diseases include Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people; people who are immunocompromised or have a chronic disease; people who are institutionalised or live in congregate and/or overcrowded living conditions; people who smoke; and people at extremes of age. Additional risk factors for iGAS include pregnant and post-partum women.

Public health response

iGAS, meningococcal disease and IPD are [notifiable](#) in Queensland and notification rates are closely monitored by Queensland Health.

Prevention

- Ensure your patients are up to date with vaccinations (IPD, meningococcal) where available and recommended in accordance with the Queensland Immunisation schedule: [Immunisation schedule Queensland - Vaccination Matters \(initiatives.qld.gov.au\)](#)
- Given respiratory diseases can be precursors to invasive diseases, it is also important to ensure your patients, especially those most at risk, are up to date with recommended vaccinations and boosters to protect against COVID-19 and influenza.
- Encourage patients to have good hand hygiene and cough etiquette, and to stay home if they are sick.
- Optimise chronic medical conditions and encourage smoking cessation.
- Isolate potentially infectious persons in your practice and ensure appropriate infection prevention and control measures are undertaken routinely in accordance with [Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare \(2019\) | NHMRC](#)

Clinical recommendations:

Management of suspected sepsis should include:

- early fluid resuscitation
- appropriate empiric antibiotics (refer to [Topic | Therapeutic Guidelines \(tg.org.au\)](#))

- urgent escalation to assess the most appropriate location for management, including retrieval if necessary, and early senior clinical staff involvement
- advice from an infectious diseases physician or public health unit on definitive management/referral and follow up of iGAS, meningococcal and IPD cases and their contacts.

Further information

- Disease specific information can be found at: [Communicable disease control guidance | Disease control guidance \(health.qld.gov.au\)](#)
- Paediatric sepsis clinical guidelines: [Sepsis information for health professionals | Children's Health Queensland](#)
- Sepsis Australia: [Home - Australian Sepsis Network](#)
- Contact details for your local [Public Health Unit](#)
- Further information on the global situation: [Increased incidence of scarlet fever and invasive Group A Streptococcus infection - multi-country \(who.int\)](#)

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