

# Bacterial Meningitis Cases in Clark County

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## General [Disease] Information

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### Background

Meningitis is an illness of tissue inflammation that cover the brain and spinal cord, this illness can be caused by either a viral or bacterial infection. In this document, bacterial meningitis is the focus. Bacterial meningitis is more serious and potentially deadly compared to viral meningitis. Most people recover, but permanent disabilities (brain damage, hearing loss, learning disabilities) can result from the infection.

### Transmission & Risk

Some forms of bacterial meningitis are contagious. Bacteria is spread through respiratory and throat secretions (coughing, kissing); fortunately, the bacteria will not spread by casual contact or by breaing the air where a person with meningitis has been. Those with close or prolonged contact (same household, childcare center, significant others) are at an increased risk of acquiring the infection if the bacteria is caused by *Neisseria meningitidis* or *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib). Antibiotics for *N. meningitidis* are recommended, while antibiotics for Hib are no longer recommended if contacts 4 years or younger are fully vaccinated against Hib disease.

### Symptoms & Complications

Symptoms include headache, meningismus, cerebral dysfunction, and fever. A baby with meningitis may be irritable, feed poorly, and fever. In young babies, doctors may look for a soft spot on an infant's head (bulging fontanelle) or abnormal reflexes. Symptoms typically develop 3 to 7 days after exposure, later symptoms of bacterial meningitis can be serious. If anyone suspects they may have meningitis, medical care should be sought immediately.

### Testing, Diagnosis, Treatment

A doctor will collect samples of blood or cerebrospinal fluid if meningitis is suspected. It is important to identify the type of bacterial meningitis to treat it appropriately. Antibiotic treatment reduces the risk of dying from the most common types of bacterial meningitis.

There are vaccines for certain types of bacterial meningitis: Hib, some strains of *N. meningitidis*, and many types of *S. pneumoniae*.

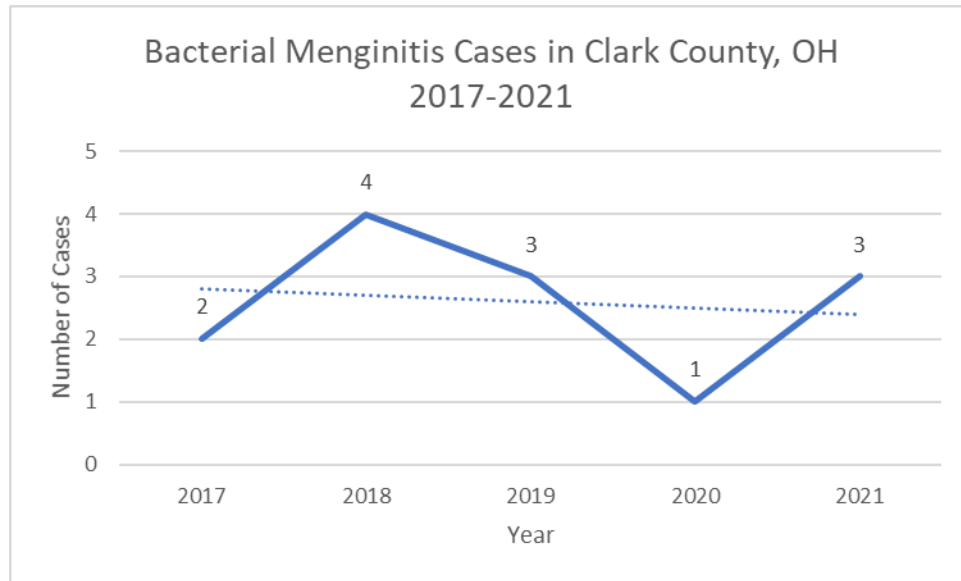
More information can be found here: <https://odh.ohio.gov/know-our-programs/infectious-disease-control-manual/section3/section-3-meningitis-bacterial>

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*Clark County Related Discussion*

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Figure 1 shows the cases in Clark County between 2017 and 2021. The highest number of cases were reported in 2018. There is a 75% decrease in cases between 2018 (4 cases) and 2020 (1 case).



*Figure 1 Bacterial Meningitis cases in Clark County*

\*Includes Suspected, Probable and Confirmed Cases.