

The Herald-Sun

Health officials ID contacts of student who died of blood infection

Feb. 20, 2014 @ 05:33 PM

[Keith Upchurch](#)

HILLSBOROUGH —

Orange County health officials worked Thursday to identify those who had recent contact with a 14-year-old East Chapel Hill High School student who died Wednesday of a rare blood infection.

The student apparently contracted meningococcal disease, an infection of the blood stream, according to Stacy Shelp, public information officer for the health department.

If caught quickly, the disease can be treated with antibiotics.

As of Thursday morning, nurses had talked to 14 people who had contact with the student, whose identity wasn't released. Seven are considered at "high likelihood of exposure," she said, and are taking antibiotics.

"It's an emerging process, but we have communicable-disease nurses at the health department on the phone for parents, community members and others who have concerns."

Shelp said the disease, which is not airborne, is rare. There apparently were no reported cases of it last year in Orange County, and Durham health officials said there have been no recent cases of the disease reported here.

The disease is more common among adolescents and college students, who sometimes share their personal effects such as drinks or lip balm. The disease is spread from person to person by direct contact with nasal secretions and saliva that can include kissing, food, and sharing drinks and cigarettes.

Officials believe the student was infectious at the school Feb. 11, 12, 17 and 18. His symptoms developed Tuesday.

If a person is infected, symptoms usually start within three or four days, but can take as long as 14 days to begin.

Health officials said the student died from what is presumed to be meningococcal disease, but confirmation was pending Thursday.

Meningococcal disease is caused by a bacterium known as meningococcus, which can cause meningitis (infection of the lining of the brain and spinal cord), sepsis (infection of the bloodstream), and other serious illnesses.

Symptoms of meningitis may include high fever, headache, stiff neck, nausea, vomiting, sensitivity to light, confusion and sleepiness. Symptoms of sepsis may include vomiting; chills; severe pain in the muscles, joints, chest or stomach; rapid breathing; and diarrhea. In the later stages, a dark purple rash can appear all over the body.

Health officials urge anyone with these symptoms to contact their doctor immediately. The disease can progress fast.

But the spread of meningococcal disease in the classroom is rare, they said.

Preventive antibiotic treatment is only recommended for members of the household and others who might have had contact with the ill student's saliva.

Counselors were at the school Thursday to help console students.

"This has been very traumatic for the family," Shelp said. "We're working closely with them, trying to keep this disease from going any further."

For more information, call the Orange County Health Department at 919-245-2400.



[WTVD-TV Raleigh-Durham, NC](#)

9th grade student at East Chapel Hill High School dies of bacterial infection

Wednesday, February 19, 2014



[Fred Shropshire](#)

More: [Bio](#), [E-mail](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Request Fred to speak at your event](#), [News Team](#)

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. (WTVD) -- Parents were notified about the death of a male 9th grade student at East Chapel Hill High School Wednesday afternoon.

Neither the school nor the health department will identify the student because of HIPAA laws, but we know the student started showing signs Tuesday and died Wednesday morning.

Now, parents are taking an alert about the student's death seriously.

"I'm just terribly, terribly sorry for the family. Terribly sorry," said parent Caroline Sherman.

Sherman got the terrible news from an automated call from the school. The message said that a student died from meningococcal disease.

"The call said that there was very sad news that a student had -- a ninth grader had passed away," said Sherman.

Sherman, who has a sophomore and senior at the school, says the call explained the health department was involved.

"It's not airborne. It doesn't live for a long time on door knobs and other hard surfaces," said Orange County Health Director Dr. Colleen Bridger. "The primary route of transmission is direct contact with the saliva."

Bridger said, though test results on the student are pending, at this time it appears the student died from a blood bacterial infection rather than meningitis. Like meningitis, meningococcal disease is passed through saliva.

"Kissing somebody, drinking after somebody, smoking the same cigarette as somebody, those types of things are what we worry about when we think about transmission," said Bridger.

Symptoms are flu-like and include fatigue and diarrhea. Health officials believe the student was exposed between Feb, 11 - 18. Now, they are working to identify relatives and close friends who might have come in contact.

"We've got nurses still working now to reach out to people who we think have come in contact with the student," said Bridger.

The health department is urging those who think they might have come in contact with the student to contact their health provider and get an antibiotic. They say, if you're concerned and don't have a health provider, they'll help.

Meantime, the student's classmates have expressed condolences on social media. They are planning to wear the color red Thursday in his honor.

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Student Death Sparks Disease Warning at NC High School



By [Katie Moisse](#)
[@katiemoisse](#)
[Follow on Twitter](#)

Feb 20, 2014 1:24pm

The unexpected death of a ninth-grader at East Chapel Hill High School has North Carolina health officials on the lookout for a [rare but deadly infection](#).

The student, whose name and gender have not been made public, died Wednesday morning less than 24 hours after showing signs of meningococcal disease, [ABC affiliate WTVD reported](#). But a letter to parents obtained by WTVD said the student may have been contagious at school for a week.

“Symptoms usually start within 3-4 days of exposure but can take as long as 14 days to begin,” the letter read.

[Kansas Reporter Loses Fingers and Toes to Deadly Meningitis](#)

Meningococcus is a bacterium that can cause meningitis and blood infections, which can pass from person to person through saliva.

“It’s not airborne. It doesn’t live for a long time on door knobs and other hard surfaces,” Orange County Health Director Dr. Colleen Bridger told WTVD . “Kissing somebody, drinking after somebody, smoking the same cigarette as somebody, those types of things are what we worry about when we think about transmission.”

The student is thought to have died from a blood infection known as meningococcal septicemia, WTVD reported.

“I’m just terribly, terribly sorry for the family. Terribly sorry,” Caroline Sherman, a mother of two students at the school, told WTVD.

Signs of meningococcal septicemia include fatigue, vomiting, diarrhea, chills and muscle aches, according to [the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#). A dark purple rash may appear in the later stages of the infection. Signs of meningitis include fever, headache and stiff neck.

The CDC recommends that all 11- and 12-year-olds be [vaccinated against meningococcal disease](#). It’s unclear whether the student received the vaccine.

The Orange County Health Department has advised people who were in close contact with that student to take antibiotics to prevent the infection, WTVD reported.

SHOWS: [Good Morning America](#)

NC high school student dies from disease

Published: Thursday, February 20, 2014 at 12:18 p.m.

Last Modified: Thursday, February 20, 2014 at 12:18 p.m.

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. (AP) — Orange County health officials say a 14-year-old student at East Chapel Hill High School has died from an illness linked to meningitis.

Officials said the student was in school Tuesday and died Wednesday.

Health department officials said the student appears to have died from meningococcal disease that can cause several illnesses, including meningitis.

The child's name has not been released.

The health department sent letters to parents stating transmission of the disease in a classroom setting is rare. The letter says the bacterium can spread when people kiss or share drinks, food or cigarettes.

Health director Colleen Bridger says the student may have been infectious and was in school Feb. 11, 12, 17 and 18.

Fourteen people who may have had contact with the student are being treated with antibiotics.

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Officials take precautions after student's death from meningococcal disease



Fourteen people who may have been exposed to an East Chapel Hill High School student with meningococcal disease are being treated with antibiotics, Orange County Health Department officials said Thursday.

Chapel Hill News

Student, 14, dies from bacterial infection

By Jonathan M. Alexander

February 20, 2014

CHAPEL HILL — A 14-year-old student died from a suspected bacterial infection in his blood stream Wednesday after complaining of a headache the day before.

The freshman at East Chapel Hill High went to the school nurse Tuesday after feeling sick, said Stacy Shelp, a spokeswoman for the Orange County Health Department. He had fever-like symptoms. The school nurse sent him home and recommended he see a doctor, which he did later that day, Shelp said.

Test results are not back, but the cause of death is suspected to be Meningococemia, a rare blood stream infection caused by Meningococcus, which can be spread through saliva and respiratory droplets when sneezing or coughing.

Multiple users on Twitter identified the student as Javan Stewart.

Stewart's Facebook page says he is from Brooklyn, N.Y., and an employee at Walker's Funeral Home in Chapel Hill said the Stewart family asked about sending his body to New York for burial, although the family will not be using the funeral home.

The Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools would not confirm the student's name, citing the family's request for privacy, spokesman Jeff Nash said.

The school system provided additional staff members for students at the school Thursday, he said.

Meningococemia in N.C.

On average, there are 18 cases of Meningococemia a year in North Carolina, and it is most common in the winter and early spring.

There have been seven cases in the state so far this year.

Judy Butler, community help services supervisor for the Orange County Health Department, said this was the first case in the county in more than a year.

The school system notified parents of East Chapel Hill High students within hours of the boy's death.

Fourteen people who reported coming in close contact with the student will or have been treated. However, going forward, there isn't much more of a concern for other students, she said.

"It's a concern because somebody died," Butler said. "But as far as the expectation there will be other cases, then no."

The infection has a high mortality rate if it attacks the blood stream, with people showing symptoms three to four days before death. Symptoms can include a high fever, a stiff neck, eyes sensitive to light, vomiting, nausea and chills.

But people can carry the bacteria in their bodies and never get sick with it, Butler said. There's no way to know when the student contracted it, she said.

"It's wicked," Butler said. "Many people who survive have lifelong health problems. But the people who are cured are very lucky."

Fighting meningococcal infection

The bacteria are spread by direct, close contact with saliva, mucous, or droplets from the nose and throat of an infected person, generally through activities such as sharing food or utensils. The bacteria are not spread by breathing the air where someone with the disease has been.

Individuals who had close contact with someone who is infected with meningococcal infection should receive antibiotics to prevent any possible infection. Preventive antibiotics are not recommended for people who were not in close contact with an infected person, but such people should be aware of possible symptoms.

The best defense against meningococcal disease is keeping up to date with recommended immunizations. A vaccine is available to prevent certain strains of meningococcal disease and is routinely recommended for children and adolescents 11 to 18 years of age. Families are encouraged to make sure their preteen and adolescent children are up-to-date on all recommended vaccines, including the meningococcal vaccine.

In North Carolina, vaccination of all college students who live on campus in a dormitory is recommended.

Chapel Hill high school student dies from meningococcal disease

- THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
- First Posted: February 20, 2014 - 12:18 pm
- Last Updated: February 20, 2014 - 12:21 pm

CHAPEL HILL, North Carolina — Orange County health officials say a 14-year-old student at East Chapel Hill High School has died from an illness linked to meningitis.

Officials said the student was in school Tuesday and died Wednesday.

Health department officials said the student appears to have died from meningococcal disease that can cause several illnesses, including meningitis.

The child's name has not been released.

The health department sent letters to parents stating transmission of the disease in a classroom setting is rare. The letter says the bacterium can spread when people kiss or share drinks, food or cigarettes.

Health director Colleen Bridger says the student may have been infectious and was in school Feb. 11, 12, 17 and 18.

Fourteen people who may have had contact with the student are being treated with antibiotics.



9th grader at East Chapel Hill High School dies of bacterial infection

Posted on: 7:10 am, February 20, 2014, by [Web Staff](#)



CHAPEL HILL, N.C. (WTVD) — Parents were notified about the death of a male 9th grade student at East Chapel Hill High School Wednesday afternoon.

According to [WTVD](#), neither the school nor the health department will identify the student because of HIPAA laws, but the student reportedly started showing signs Tuesday and died Wednesday morning.

Now, parents are taking an alert about the student's death seriously.

Parent Caroline Sherman got the terrible news from an automated call from the school. The message said that a student died from meningococcal disease.

Sherman, who has a sophomore and senior at the school, says the call explained the health department was involved.

“It’s not airborne. It doesn’t live for a long time on door knobs and other hard surfaces,” said Orange County Health Director Dr. Colleen Bridger. “The primary route of transmission is direct contact with the saliva.”

Bridger said, though test results on the student are pending, at this time it appears the student died from a blood bacterial infection rather than meningitis. Like meningitis, meningococcal disease is passed through saliva.

“Kissing somebody, drinking after somebody, smoking the same cigarette as somebody, those types of things are what we worry about when we think about transmission,” said Bridger.

Symptoms are flu-like and include fatigue and diarrhea. Health officials believe the student was exposed between Feb, 11 – 18. Now, they are working to identify relatives and close friends who might have come in contact.

“We’ve got nurses still working now to reach out to people who we think have come in contact with the student,” said Bridger.

The health department is urging those who think they might have come in contact with the student to contact their health provider and get an antibiotic. They say, if you’re concerned and don’t have a health provider, they’ll help.

Source: [WTVD](#)

East Chapel Hill High student dies of bacterial disease

Feb. 19, 2014 @ 08:06 PM

[Wes Platt](#)

CHAPEL HILL —

A 14-year-old East Chapel Hill High School student died Wednesday, apparently of a meningococcal disease.

It was unknown whether it was bacterial meningitis, said Jeff Nash, spokesman for Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools.

The school's principal is expected to meet with students this morning, Nash said. Also, the district will provide extra resources, including nurses, grief counselors and social workers as students mourn the loss of their fellow student, a boy in ninth grade.

Symptoms of such diseases can appear quickly or over several days, usually within 3 to 7 days after exposure, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The CDC reports that symptoms include sudden onset of fever, headache and stiff neck, as well as other warning signs, such as nausea, vomiting, confusion and increased sensitivity to light.

If caught quickly, the disease can be treated with antibiotics. It is not spread through casual contact, nor is it airborne. However, it is contagious via the patient's saliva, so if sharing drinks or kissing, "it can be a concern," Nash said.

The Kansas City Star

NC High School Student Dies from Disease

Updated: 2014-02-20T17:33:46Z

February 20

The Associated Press

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. — Orange County health officials say a 14-year-old student at East Chapel Hill High School has died from an illness linked to meningitis.

Officials said the student was in school Tuesday and died Wednesday.

Health department officials said the student appears to have died from meningococcal disease that can cause several illnesses, including meningitis.

The child's name has not been released.

The health department sent letters to parents stating transmission of the disease in a classroom setting is rare. The letter says the bacterium can spread when people kiss or share drinks, food or cigarettes.

Health director Colleen Bridger says the student may have been infectious and was in school Feb. 11, 12, 17 and 18.

Fourteen people who may have had contact with the student are being treated with antibiotics.

Read more here: <http://www.kansascity.com/2014/02/20/4837421/nc-high-school-student-dies-from.html#storylink=cpy>

Thursday, Feb 20 2014

[9PM 66°F 12AM 60°F 5-Day Forecast](#)

• **Rare infection that kills just 24 hours after symptoms show claims boy, 14, amid fears of high school outbreak**

- **Unnamed pupil at East Chapel Hill High School was diagnosed Tuesday and was dead just a day later**
- **Meningococcal disease is caused by the same bacteria that can cause Meningitis and blood infections**
- **People who were in close contact with student have been advised to take antibiotics to prevent infection**

By [Daily Mail Reporter](#)

PUBLISHED: 15:14 EST, 20 February 2014 | **UPDATED:** 15:27 EST, 20 February 2014

A ninth-grade student at a North Carolina high school has died less than 24 hours after being diagnosed with a rare, but deadly bacterial infection.

Officials at East Chapel Hill High School have said they believe the unnamed 14-year-old boy died on Wednesday from Meningococcal disease.

It is a bacterial infection that is caused by the same bacteria that can cause Meningitis and blood infections.



Officials at East Chapel Hill High School have said they believe the unnamed 14-year-old boy died on Wednesday from Meningococcal disease

Concerned parents have received a letter from school officials that the boy may have been infectious on Feb. 11, 12, 17 and 18.

‘If a person is infected, symptoms usually start within three to four days of exposure but can take as long as 14 days to begin,’ the school said.

The boy presented the first symptoms on Tuesday, said the Orange County Health Department.

‘It’s not airborne. It doesn’t live for a long time on door knobs and other hard surfaces,’ Orange County Health Director Dr. Colleen Bridger told [WTVD](#).

‘Kissing somebody, drinking after somebody, smoking the same cigarette as somebody, those types of things are what we worry about when we think about transmission.’

The student is thought to have died from a blood infection known as meningococcal septicemia.



A dark purple rash may appear in the later stages of Meningococcal disease

Signs of meningococcal septicemia include fatigue, vomiting, diarrhea, chills and muscle aches, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

A dark purple rash may appear in the later stages of the infection. Signs of meningitis include fever, headache and stiff neck.

The Center for Disease Control recommends that all 11- and 12-year-olds be vaccinated against meningococcal disease. It's unclear whether the student received the vaccine.

The Orange County Health Department has advised people who were in close contact with that student to take antibiotics to prevent the infection.

The school said the spread of meningococcal disease in a classroom setting is rare.

Read more:

- [9th grade student at East Chapel Hill High School dies of bacterial infection](#)

Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2564175/Rare-infection-kills-just-24-hours-symptoms-claims-boy-14-amid-fears-high-school-outbreak.html#ixzz2ttoBVjg6>

News and Observer

Chapel Hill student dies suddenly of meningitis-like disease

2-19-14

CHAPEL HILL — A 14-year-old student of East Chapel Hill High School has died of an illness apparently linked to meningitis.

The student, who is not being identified, was in school on Tuesday and passed away Wednesday, according to school and county officials.

The child was believed to be infected by the bacterium “meningococcus,” which can cause several illnesses, including: meningitis, an infection of the lining of the brain and spinal cord; sepsis, an infection of the bloodstream; and other serious illnesses, according to the Orange County Health Department.

Transmission of the disease in a “classroom setting” is rare, but the bacterium can spread by saliva when people kiss or share drinks, food or cigarettes, the health department told parents in a letter.

The student may have been infectious and in school on Feb. 11, 12, 17 and 18, according to Colleen Bridger, the county’s health director. People infected by meningococcus generally show symptoms within three or four days, but onset can take 14 days.

The school notified parents of the death within hours via voice messages and emails.

Health officials recommend preventive antibiotic treatment for members of the deceased student’s household and others who might have had contact with the student’s saliva. The Orange County Health Department is working to identify people who need preventive treatment. The health department requests that anyone with questions call a physician or the health department at 919-245-2400.

Read more here: <http://www.newsobserver.com/2014/02/19/3637604/chapel-hill-student-dies-suddenly.html#storylink=cpy>

News and Observer

Orange CountyChapel Hill boy, 14, dies of apparent blood infection

By Jonathan M. Alexander

February 20, 2014 Updated 5 hours ago

CHAPEL HILL — A 14-year-old student died from a suspected bacterial infection in his bloodstream Wednesday after complaining of a headache the day before.

The freshman at East Chapel Hill High went to the school nurse Tuesday after feeling sick, said Stacy Shelp, a spokeswoman for the Orange County Health Department. He was feverish. The school nurse sent him home and recommended he see a doctor, which he did later that day, Shelp said.

Test results are not back, but the cause of death is suspected to be meningococemia, a rare bloodstream infection caused by Meningococcus, which can spread through saliva and respiratory droplets.

Multiple users on Twitter identified the student as Javan Stewart.

Stewart's Facebook page says he is from Brooklyn, N.Y. An employee at Walker's Funeral Home in Chapel Hill said the Stewart family asked about sending his body to New York for burial, although the family will not be using the funeral home.

The Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools would not confirm the student's name, citing the family's request for privacy, spokesman Jeff Nash said.

The school system provided additional staff members for students at the school Thursday, he said.

Meningococemia in N.C. On average, there are 18 cases of meningococemia a year in North Carolina, and it is most common in the winter and early spring.

There have been seven cases in the state so far this year.

Judy Butler, community help services supervisor for the Orange County Health Department, said this was the first case in the county in more than a year.

The school system notified parents of East Chapel Hill High students within hours of the boy's death.

Fourteen people who reported coming in close contact with the student will or have been treated. However, going forward, there isn't much more of a concern for other students, she said.

"It's a concern because somebody died," Butler said. "But as far as the expectation there will be other cases, then no."

The infection has a high mortality rate if it attacks the bloodstream, with people showing symptoms three to four days before death. Symptoms can include a high fever, a stiff neck, eyes sensitive to light, vomiting, nausea and chills.

But people can carry the bacteria in their bodies and never get sick with it, Butler said. There's no way to know when the student contracted it, she said.

"It's wicked," Butler said. "Many people who survive have lifelong health problems. But the people who are cured are very lucky."

Fighting meningococcal infection

The bacteria are spread by direct, close contact with saliva, mucous, or droplets from the nose and throat of an infected person, generally through activities such as sharing food or utensils. The bacteria are not spread by breathing the air where someone with the disease has been.

Individuals who had close contact with someone who is infected with meningococcal infection should receive antibiotics to prevent any possible infection. Preventive antibiotics are not recommended for people who were not in close contact with an infected person, but such people should be aware of possible symptoms.

The best defense against meningococcal disease is keeping up to date with recommended immunizations. A vaccine is available to prevent certain strains of meningococcal disease and is routinely recommended for children and adolescents 11 to 18 years of age. Families are encouraged to make sure their preteen and adolescent children are up-to-date on all recommended vaccines, including the meningococcal vaccine.

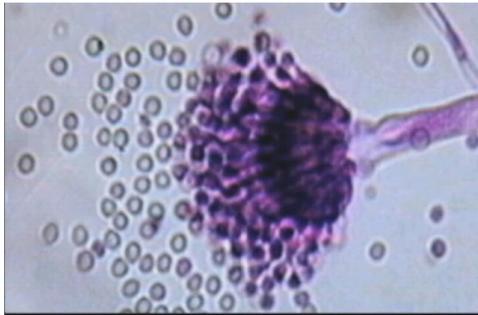
In North Carolina, vaccination of all college students who live on campus in a dormitory is recommended.

Read more here: <http://www.newsobserver.com/2014/02/20/3640454/boy-14-dies-of-apparent-blood.html#storylink=cpy>

TWC News

Several people being treated for possible exposure to rare disease

- **By: Linnie Supall**
- 1:30 PM



CHAPEL HILL- More than a dozen people in Orange County are undergoing treatment after possible exposure to a rare, but deadly disease.

It's called Meningococcal disease, a bacterial infection that took the life of a student at East Chapel Hill High School Wednesday.

"Our nurses have a set of questions they're asking everyone who may have come in contact with the student," said Colleen Bridger, director of the Orange Co. Health Dept.

The disease is passed through saliva and can be contracted from sharing drinks or kissing.

Health officials say 14 people in close contact with the student may have been exposed. They're now taking antibiotics and expected to be OK.

"The time frame to get people started [on antibiotics] is a three day window. We are well within that window," said Bridger.

According to the State Department of Health and Human Services, about 10 percent of people are a carrier of the bacteria, but sometimes this bacteria can infect the bloodstream.

Health experts say getting infected is rare, but vaccines are available to decrease your chances of contracting it. North Carolina has seen an average of 18 cases of meningococcal disease per year with most cases occurring in the late winter and early Spring.

So far this year, seven cases of the diseases have been reported in North Carolina. Health officials haven't identified any links between the cases.

14-Year-Old East Chapel Hill Student Dies Wednesday

By [Ran Northam](#)

Posted February 19, 2014 at 9:16 pm



[Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools](#) spokesperson Jeff Nash says a 14-year-old male student of East Chapel Hill High School died Wednesday, presumably from meningococcal disease.

Nash says at this time it has not been confirmed whether or not he had meningitis at the time of his death. He says the school worked closely with the Orange County Health Department to make sure other students are safe.

East Chapel Hill principal Eileen Tully sent a message to parents informing them of the situation. She shared a letter from health director Colleen Bridger, which included more information about the disease.

According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), symptoms of meningococcal disease include nausea, vomiting, photophobia (increased sensitivity to light), and an altered mental status (confusion). The disease is spread through the exchange of respiratory and throat secretions like saliva. Anyone experiencing symptoms should contact the Orange County Health Department or your personal physician immediately.

Principal Tully plans to meet with students in the morning, according to Nash, and counselors will be available for students.

The health department worked to find a list of close friends of the student and called their families Wednesday night.

Close Contacts Of ECH Student Who Died Being Monitored

By [Ran Northam](#)

Posted February 20, 2014 at 10:24 am



OC Health Department Director Colleen Bridger (L); CHCCS Superintendent Tom Forcella (R)

The Orange County Health Department worked closely with East Chapel Hill High School and the school district shortly after finding out a 14-year-old student at East contracted [meningococcal disease](#) and later died.

“We have given prophylactic antibiotics to 14 contacts at this point,” said [Orange County Health Department](#) Director Colleen Bridger as she addressed the media Thursday morning. “Typically it’s going to be close family members that are the most exposed.”

[Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools](#) Superintendent Tom Forcella joined Dr. Bridger and said the student left school Tuesday after telling the school nurse he felt ill.

“The nurse advised the family to seek medical attention,” Dr. Forcella said. “He thought maybe he just wasn’t feeling well. The nurse contacted the parents and advised them to seek medical attention, and the family did go see either their doctor or a clinic.”

According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), symptoms of meningococcal disease include nausea, vomiting, photophobia (increased sensitivity to light), and an altered mental status (confusion). It is spread through the transmission of respiratory and throat secretions like saliva.

“Meningococcal disease is a generic term that encompasses the different types of illnesses that you can get if you are infected with the bacteria,” Dr. Bridger said. “You’re most commonly, probably, familiar with meningitis, which is when the bacteria gets into the spinal fluid and the brain of the infected individual; that would be meningitis. We

believe we are dealing with a blood infection in this particular case, which is why we'll be referring to it a little bit more generically.”

Dr. Bridger said it's impossible to trace where the student picked up the bacteria.

She said the disease is most commonly seen in adolescents.

“I think 10-15 percent of people who are infected with a meningococcal disease will die,” Dr. Bridger says.

“Another up to 50-percent will suffer life-long consequences of the disease if they do recover. So it's a very, very serious disease. The good news is it's very, very hard to get.”

Anyone experiencing symptoms should contact the Orange County Health Department or your personal physician immediately.

For more information about how East Chapel Hill is handling the situation at the school, [click here](#).



E. Chapel Hill HS student dies from bacterial infection

Posted: Feb 19, 2014 6:00 PM EST Updated: Feb 20, 2014 11:51 AM EST
by WNCN Staff

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. -

A student at East Chapel Hill High School died Wednesday of a bacterial infection, the school system said.

School officials say a 14-year-old student died from what is presumed to be Meningococcal disease.

Meningococcal disease is a bacterial infection caused by the same bacteria that can cause Meningitis.

In a letter to parents, the school said the student may have been infectious at school Feb. 11, 12, 17 and 18.

"If a person is infected, symptoms usually start within three to four days of exposure but can take as long as 14 days to begin," the school said.

The Orange County Health Department said the boy presented the first symptoms on Tuesday.

School official say they do not know how the student contracted the infection. The Center for Disease Control says the infection can be passed directly through saliva as well as "prolonged general contact with an infected person."

The school said the spread of meningococcal disease in a classroom setting is rare.

Dr. Chris Ingram works with Raleigh Infectious Diseases off Lake Boone Trail. He said Wake County will see three or four cases a year.

Ingram said vaccines have brought down the number of infections greatly but outbreaks will occur in closely quartered people.

The Chapel Hill-Carrboro School System the principal plans to speak to students tomorrow morning about this and East Chapel Hill High School will have school nurses and counselors available for students on Thursday.

14 on antibiotics after contact with ECHHS student

Posted: Feb 20, 2014 9:36 AM EST Updated: Feb 20, 2014 11:52 AM EST
by WNCN Staff



CHAPEL HILL, N.C. -

The Orange County Health Department says 14 people who came in contact with an East Chapel Hill High School student who died Wednesday of a bacterial infection are on antibiotics.

MOREAdditional Links

School officials said on Wednesday that a 14-year-old student died from what was presumed to be Meningococcal disease. Meningococcal disease is a bacterial infection caused by the same bacteria that can cause Meningitis.

Orange County Health Director Colleen Bridger said nurses were able to trace the student's contacts and inform those who came in contact with the 14-year-old boy.

In a letter to parents, the school said the student may have been infectious at school Feb. 11, 12, 17 and 18.

"If a person is infected, symptoms usually start within three to four days of exposure but can take as long as 14 days to begin," the school said.

The Orange County Health Department said the boy presented the first symptoms on Tuesday.

Bridger said the disease is not easily spread, and a person would have to come into contact through the infected person's saliva during the infected period.

Bridger said Thursday that it is hard to know where the bacteria came from.

RELATED STORIES

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Published: 2014-02-20 10:07:00

Updated: 2014-02-20 12:18:04

LOCAL NEWS

Officials take precautions after student's death from meningococcal disease

Posted 10:07 a.m. today

Updated 30 minutes ago





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[Chapel Hill student dies from meningococcal disease](#)

[CDC information on meningococcal disease](#)

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. — Fourteen people who may have been exposed to an East Chapel Hill High School student with meningococcal disease are being treated with antibiotics, Orange County Health Department officials said Thursday.

The 14-year-old student died Wednesday, only one day after developing symptoms of meningitis, which is caused by the disease, school officials said.

The infection is passed from person to person through oral and nasal secretions. It is not airborne.

Orange County Health Director Colleen Bridger said Thursday that there is a three-day window of time to get people who may have been exposed antibiotics. It wasn't clear how many of those people may be students at the high school.

"We are well within that window," she said. "We are confident we are going to be able to get in touch with everyone who may have been exposed."

Bridger also said officials may never know what led to the infection in the student. Officials believe the student was exposed between Feb. 11-18.

Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools Superintendent Thomas Forcella said the student visited the school's nurse on Tuesday and was advised to seek medical attention.

School officials sent letters to parents Wednesday warning them to be on the lookout for signs of meningococcal disease.

Signs and symptoms of include:

Severe fatigue

Severe body aches

Severe flu-like symptoms

High fever

Stiff neck

Nausea

Vomiting

Sensitivity to light

Confusion

Counselors and extra nurses were at the school Thursday to help console students.

Chapel Hill student dies from meningococcal disease

Posted 7:22 p.m. yesterday

Updated 10:54 p.m. yesterday



MORE ON THIS

- [CDC information on meningococcal disease](#)

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. — An East Chapel Hill High School student died from meningococcal disease Wednesday.

The infection, which causes meningitis, is passed from person to person through oral and nasal secretions. It is not airborne.

Officials believe the 14-year-old student was exposed between Feb. 11-18. The victim's symptoms developed Tuesday, officials said.

Officials have identified close friends of the victim who may have been exposed.

Signs and symptoms include:

Severe fatigue
Severe body aches
Severe flu-like symptoms

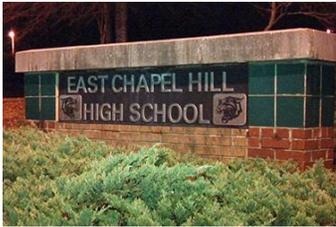
Counselors and extra nurses will be at the school tomorrow to help console students.

WXII 12 (Winston-Salem, Greensboro, High Point)

. NC high school student dies from meningococcal disease

14 people placed on antibiotics

UPDATED 1:24 PM EST Feb 20, 2014



CHAPEL HILL, N.C. —Orange County health officials say a 14-year-old student at East Chapel Hill High School has died from an illness linked to meningitis.

Officials said the student was in school Tuesday and died Wednesday.

Health department officials said the student appears to have died from meningococcal disease that can cause several illnesses, including meningitis.

The child's name has not been released.

The health department sent letters to parents stating transmission of the disease in a classroom setting is rare. The letter says the bacterium can spread when people kiss or share drinks, food or cigarettes.

Health director Colleen Bridger says the student may have been infectious and was in school Feb. 11, 12, 17 and 18.

Fourteen people who may have had contact with the student are being treated with antibiotics.

Read more: <http://www.wxii12.com/news/local-news/north-carolina/nc-high-school-student-dies-from-meningococcal-disease/24582096#ixzz2tuaNmDG>



[WTVD-TV Raleigh-Durham, NC](#)

9th grade student at East Chapel Hill High School dies of bacterial infection

Wednesday, February 19, 2014



[Fred Shropshire](#)

More: [Bio](#), [E-mail](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Request Fred to speak at your event](#), [News Team](#)

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. (WTVD) -- Parents were notified about the death of a male 9th grade student at East Chapel Hill High School Wednesday afternoon.

Neither the school nor the health department will identify the student because of HIPAA laws, but we know the student started showing signs Tuesday and died Wednesday morning.

Now, parents are taking an alert about the student's death seriously.

"I'm just terribly, terribly sorry for the family. Terribly sorry," said parent Caroline Sherman.

Sherman got the terrible news from an automated call from the school. The message said that a student died from meningococcal disease.

"The call said that there was very sad news that a student had -- a ninth grader had passed away," said Sherman.

Sherman, who has a sophomore and senior at the school, says the call explained the health department was involved.

"It's not airborne. It doesn't live for a long time on door knobs and other hard surfaces," said Orange County Health Director Dr. Colleen Bridger. "The primary route of transmission is direct contact with the saliva."

Bridger said, though test results on the student are pending, at this time it appears the student died from a blood bacterial infection rather than meningitis. Like meningitis, meningococcal disease is passed through saliva.

"Kissing somebody, drinking after somebody, smoking the same cigarette as somebody, those types of things are what we worry about when we think about transmission," said Bridger.

Symptoms are flu-like and include fatigue and diarrhea. Health officials believe the student was exposed between Feb, 11 - 18. Now, they are working to identify relatives and close friends who might have come in contact.

"We've got nurses still working now to reach out to people who we think have come in contact with the student," said Bridger.

The health department is urging those who think they might have come in contact with the student to contact their health provider and get an antibiotic. They say, if you're concerned and don't have a health provider, they'll help.

Meantime, the student's classmates have expressed condolences on social media. They are planning to wear the color red Thursday in his honor.

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Student Death Sparks Disease Warning at NC High School



By [Katie Moisse](#)

[@katiemoisse](#)

[Follow on Twitter](#)

Feb 20, 2014 1:24pm

The unexpected death of a ninth-grader at East Chapel Hill High School has North Carolina health officials on the lookout for a [rare but deadly infection](#).

The student, whose name and gender have not been made public, died Wednesday morning less than 24 hours after showing signs of meningococcal disease, [ABC affiliate WTVD reported](#). But a letter to parents obtained by WTVD said the student may have been contagious at school for a week.

“Symptoms usually start within 3-4 days of exposure but can take as long as 14 days to begin,” the letter read.

[Kansas Reporter Loses Fingers and Toes to Deadly Meningitis](#)

Meningococcus is a bacterium that can cause meningitis and blood infections, which can pass from person to person through saliva.

“It’s not airborne. It doesn’t live for a long time on door knobs and other hard surfaces,” Orange County Health Director Dr. Colleen Bridger told WTVD . “Kissing somebody, drinking after somebody, smoking the same cigarette as somebody, those types of things are what we worry about when we think about transmission.”

The student is thought to have died from a blood infection known as meningococcal septicemia, WTVD reported.

“I’m just terribly, terribly sorry for the family. Terribly sorry,” Caroline Sherman, a mother of two students at the school, told WTVD.

Signs of meningococcal septicemia include fatigue, vomiting, diarrhea, chills and muscle aches, according to [the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#). A dark purple rash may appear in the later stages of the infection. Signs of meningitis include fever, headache and stiff neck.

The CDC recommends that all 11- and 12-year-olds be [vaccinated against meningococcal disease](#). It’s unclear whether the student received the vaccine.

The Orange County Health Department has advised people who were in close contact with that student to take antibiotics to prevent the infection, WTVD reported.

SHOWS: [Good Morning America](#)

NC high school student dies from disease

Published: Thursday, February 20, 2014 at 12:18 p.m.

Last Modified: Thursday, February 20, 2014 at 12:18 p.m.

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. (AP) — Orange County health officials say a 14-year-old student at East Chapel Hill High School has died from an illness linked to meningitis.

Officials said the student was in school Tuesday and died Wednesday.

Health department officials said the student appears to have died from meningococcal disease that can cause several illnesses, including meningitis.

The child's name has not been released.

The health department sent letters to parents stating transmission of the disease in a classroom setting is rare. The letter says the bacterium can spread when people kiss or share drinks, food or cigarettes.

Health director Colleen Bridger says the student may have been infectious and was in school Feb. 11, 12, 17 and 18.

Fourteen people who may have had contact with the student are being treated with antibiotics.

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Officials take precautions after student's death from meningococcal disease



Fourteen people who may have been exposed to an East Chapel Hill High School student with meningococcal disease are being treated with antibiotics, Orange County Health Department officials said Thursday.

Chapel Hill News

Student, 14, dies from bacterial infection

By Jonathan M. Alexander

February 20, 2014

CHAPEL HILL — A 14-year-old student died from a suspected bacterial infection in his blood stream Wednesday after complaining of a headache the day before.

The freshman at East Chapel Hill High went to the school nurse Tuesday after feeling sick, said Stacy Shelp, a spokeswoman for the Orange County Health Department. He had fever-like symptoms. The school nurse sent him home and recommended he see a doctor, which he did later that day, Shelp said.

Test results are not back, but the cause of death is suspected to be Meningococemia, a rare blood stream infection caused by Meningococcus, which can be spread through saliva and respiratory droplets when sneezing or coughing.

Multiple users on Twitter identified the student as Javan Stewart.

Stewart's Facebook page says he is from Brooklyn, N.Y., and an employee at Walker's Funeral Home in Chapel Hill said the Stewart family asked about sending his body to New York for burial, although the family will not be using the funeral home.

The Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools would not confirm the student's name, citing the family's request for privacy, spokesman Jeff Nash said.

The school system provided additional staff members for students at the school Thursday, he said.

Meningococemia in N.C.

On average, there are 18 cases of Meningococemia a year in North Carolina, and it is most common in the winter and early spring.

There have been seven cases in the state so far this year.

Judy Butler, community help services supervisor for the Orange County Health Department, said this was the first case in the county in more than a year.

The school system notified parents of East Chapel Hill High students within hours of the boy's death.

Fourteen people who reported coming in close contact with the student will or have been treated. However, going forward, there isn't much more of a concern for other students, she said.

"It's a concern because somebody died," Butler said. "But as far as the expectation there will be other cases, then no."

The infection has a high mortality rate if it attacks the blood stream, with people showing symptoms three to four days before death. Symptoms can include a high fever, a stiff neck, eyes sensitive to light, vomiting, nausea and chills.

But people can carry the bacteria in their bodies and never get sick with it, Butler said. There's no way to know when the student contracted it, she said.

"It's wicked," Butler said. "Many people who survive have lifelong health problems. But the people who are cured are very lucky."

Fighting meningococcal infection

The bacteria are spread by direct, close contact with saliva, mucous, or droplets from the nose and throat of an infected person, generally through activities such as sharing food or utensils. The bacteria are not spread by breathing the air where someone with the disease has been.

Individuals who had close contact with someone who is infected with meningococcal infection should receive antibiotics to prevent any possible infection. Preventive antibiotics are not recommended for people who were not in close contact with an infected person, but such people should be aware of possible symptoms.

The best defense against meningococcal disease is keeping up to date with recommended immunizations. A vaccine is available to prevent certain strains of meningococcal disease and is routinely recommended for children and adolescents 11 to 18 years of age. Families are encouraged to make sure their preteen and adolescent children are up-to-date on all recommended vaccines, including the meningococcal vaccine.

In North Carolina, vaccination of all college students who live on campus in a dormitory is recommended.

Chapel Hill high school student dies from meningococcal disease

- THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
- First Posted: February 20, 2014 - 12:18 pm
- Last Updated: February 20, 2014 - 12:21 pm

CHAPEL HILL, North Carolina — Orange County health officials say a 14-year-old student at East Chapel Hill High School has died from an illness linked to meningitis.

Officials said the student was in school Tuesday and died Wednesday.

Health department officials said the student appears to have died from meningococcal disease that can cause several illnesses, including meningitis.

The child's name has not been released.

The health department sent letters to parents stating transmission of the disease in a classroom setting is rare. The letter says the bacterium can spread when people kiss or share drinks, food or cigarettes.

Health director Colleen Bridger says the student may have been infectious and was in school Feb. 11, 12, 17 and 18.

Fourteen people who may have had contact with the student are being treated with antibiotics.



9th grader at East Chapel Hill High School dies of bacterial infection

Posted on: 7:10 am, February 20, 2014, by [Web Staff](#)



CHAPEL HILL, N.C. (WTVD) — Parents were notified about the death of a male 9th grade student at East Chapel Hill High School Wednesday afternoon.

According to [WTVD](#), neither the school nor the health department will identify the student because of HIPAA laws, but the student reportedly started showing signs Tuesday and died Wednesday morning.

Now, parents are taking an alert about the student's death seriously.

Parent Caroline Sherman got the terrible news from an automated call from the school. The message said that a student died from meningococcal disease.

Sherman, who has a sophomore and senior at the school, says the call explained the health department was involved.

“It’s not airborne. It doesn’t live for a long time on door knobs and other hard surfaces,” said Orange County Health Director Dr. Colleen Bridger. “The primary route of transmission is direct contact with the saliva.”

Bridger said, though test results on the student are pending, at this time it appears the student died from a blood bacterial infection rather than meningitis. Like meningitis, meningococcal disease is passed through saliva.

“Kissing somebody, drinking after somebody, smoking the same cigarette as somebody, those types of things are what we worry about when we think about transmission,” said Bridger.

Symptoms are flu-like and include fatigue and diarrhea. Health officials believe the student was exposed between Feb, 11 – 18. Now, they are working to identify relatives and close friends who might have come in contact.

“We’ve got nurses still working now to reach out to people who we think have come in contact with the student,” said Bridger.

The health department is urging those who think they might have come in contact with the student to contact their health provider and get an antibiotic. They say, if you’re concerned and don’t have a health provider, they’ll help.

Source: [WTVD](#)

East Chapel Hill High student dies of bacterial disease

Feb. 19, 2014 @ 08:06 PM

[Wes Platt](#)

CHAPEL HILL —

A 14-year-old East Chapel Hill High School student died Wednesday, apparently of a meningococcal disease.

It was unknown whether it was bacterial meningitis, said Jeff Nash, spokesman for Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools.

The school's principal is expected to meet with students this morning, Nash said. Also, the district will provide extra resources, including nurses, grief counselors and social workers as students mourn the loss of their fellow student, a boy in ninth grade.

Symptoms of such diseases can appear quickly or over several days, usually within 3 to 7 days after exposure, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The CDC reports that symptoms include sudden onset of fever, headache and stiff neck, as well as other warning signs, such as nausea, vomiting, confusion and increased sensitivity to light.

If caught quickly, the disease can be treated with antibiotics. It is not spread through casual contact, nor is it airborne. However, it is contagious via the patient's saliva, so if sharing drinks or kissing, "it can be a concern," Nash said.

The Kansas City Star

NC High School Student Dies from Disease

Updated: 2014-02-20T17:33:46Z

February 20

The Associated Press

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. — Orange County health officials say a 14-year-old student at East Chapel Hill High School has died from an illness linked to meningitis.

Officials said the student was in school Tuesday and died Wednesday.

Health department officials said the student appears to have died from meningococcal disease that can cause several illnesses, including meningitis.

The child's name has not been released.

The health department sent letters to parents stating transmission of the disease in a classroom setting is rare. The letter says the bacterium can spread when people kiss or share drinks, food or cigarettes.

Health director Colleen Bridger says the student may have been infectious and was in school Feb. 11, 12, 17 and 18.

Fourteen people who may have had contact with the student are being treated with antibiotics.

Read more here: <http://www.kansascity.com/2014/02/20/4837421/nc-high-school-student-dies-from.html#storylink=cpy>

Thursday, Feb 20 2014

[9PM 66°F 12AM 60°F 5-Day Forecast](#)

• **Rare infection that kills just 24 hours after symptoms show claims boy, 14, amid fears of high school outbreak**

- **Unnamed pupil at East Chapel Hill High School was diagnosed Tuesday and was dead just a day later**
- **Meningococcal disease is caused by the same bacteria that can cause Meningitis and blood infections**
- **People who were in close contact with student have been advised to take antibiotics to prevent infection**

By [Daily Mail Reporter](#)

PUBLISHED: 15:14 EST, 20 February 2014 | **UPDATED:** 15:27 EST, 20 February 2014

A ninth-grade student at a North Carolina high school has died less than 24 hours after being diagnosed with a rare, but deadly bacterial infection.

Officials at East Chapel Hill High School have said they believe the unnamed 14-year-old boy died on Wednesday from Meningococcal disease.

It is a bacterial infection that is caused by the same bacteria that can cause Meningitis and blood infections.



Officials at East Chapel Hill High School have said they believe the unnamed 14-year-old boy died on Wednesday from Meningococcal disease

Concerned parents have received a letter from school officials that the boy may have been infectious on Feb. 11, 12, 17 and 18.

‘If a person is infected, symptoms usually start within three to four days of exposure but can take as long as 14 days to begin,’ the school said.

The boy presented the first symptoms on Tuesday, said the Orange County Health Department.

‘It’s not airborne. It doesn’t live for a long time on door knobs and other hard surfaces,’ Orange County Health Director Dr. Colleen Bridger told [WTVD](#).

‘Kissing somebody, drinking after somebody, smoking the same cigarette as somebody, those types of things are what we worry about when we think about transmission.’

The student is thought to have died from a blood infection known as meningococcal septicemia.



A dark purple rash may appear in the later stages of Meningococcal disease

Signs of meningococcal septicemia include fatigue, vomiting, diarrhea, chills and muscle aches, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

A dark purple rash may appear in the later stages of the infection. Signs of meningitis include fever, headache and stiff neck.

The Center for Disease Control recommends that all 11- and 12-year-olds be vaccinated against meningococcal disease. It's unclear whether the student received the vaccine.

The Orange County Health Department has advised people who were in close contact with that student to take antibiotics to prevent the infection.

The school said the spread of meningococcal disease in a classroom setting is rare.

Read more:

- [9th grade student at East Chapel Hill High School dies of bacterial infection](#)

Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2564175/Rare-infection-kills-just-24-hours-symptoms-claims-boy-14-amid-fears-high-school-outbreak.html#ixzz2ttoBVjg6>

News and Observer

Chapel Hill student dies suddenly of meningitis-like disease

2-19-14

CHAPEL HILL — A 14-year-old student of East Chapel Hill High School has died of an illness apparently linked to meningitis.

The student, who is not being identified, was in school on Tuesday and passed away Wednesday, according to school and county officials.

The child was believed to be infected by the bacterium “meningococcus,” which can cause several illnesses, including: meningitis, an infection of the lining of the brain and spinal cord; sepsis, an infection of the bloodstream; and other serious illnesses, according to the Orange County Health Department.

Transmission of the disease in a “classroom setting” is rare, but the bacterium can spread by saliva when people kiss or share drinks, food or cigarettes, the health department told parents in a letter.

The student may have been infectious and in school on Feb. 11, 12, 17 and 18, according to Colleen Bridger, the county’s health director. People infected by meningococcus generally show symptoms within three or four days, but onset can take 14 days.

The school notified parents of the death within hours via voice messages and emails.

Health officials recommend preventive antibiotic treatment for members of the deceased student’s household and others who might have had contact with the student’s saliva. The Orange County Health Department is working to identify people who need preventive treatment. The health department requests that anyone with questions call a physician or the health department at 919-245-2400.

Read more here: <http://www.newsobserver.com/2014/02/19/3637604/chapel-hill-student-dies-suddenly.html#storylink=cpy>

News and Observer

Orange CountyChapel Hill boy, 14, dies of apparent blood infection

By Jonathan M. Alexander

February 20, 2014 Updated 5 hours ago

CHAPEL HILL — A 14-year-old student died from a suspected bacterial infection in his bloodstream Wednesday after complaining of a headache the day before.

The freshman at East Chapel Hill High went to the school nurse Tuesday after feeling sick, said Stacy Shelp, a spokeswoman for the Orange County Health Department. He was feverish. The school nurse sent him home and recommended he see a doctor, which he did later that day, Shelp said.

Test results are not back, but the cause of death is suspected to be meningococemia, a rare bloodstream infection caused by Meningococcus, which can spread through saliva and respiratory droplets.

Multiple users on Twitter identified the student as Javan Stewart.

Stewart's Facebook page says he is from Brooklyn, N.Y. An employee at Walker's Funeral Home in Chapel Hill said the Stewart family asked about sending his body to New York for burial, although the family will not be using the funeral home.

The Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools would not confirm the student's name, citing the family's request for privacy, spokesman Jeff Nash said.

The school system provided additional staff members for students at the school Thursday, he said.

Meningococemia in N.C. On average, there are 18 cases of meningococemia a year in North Carolina, and it is most common in the winter and early spring.

There have been seven cases in the state so far this year.

Judy Butler, community help services supervisor for the Orange County Health Department, said this was the first case in the county in more than a year.

The school system notified parents of East Chapel Hill High students within hours of the boy's death.

Fourteen people who reported coming in close contact with the student will or have been treated. However, going forward, there isn't much more of a concern for other students, she said.

"It's a concern because somebody died," Butler said. "But as far as the expectation there will be other cases, then no."

The infection has a high mortality rate if it attacks the bloodstream, with people showing symptoms three to four days before death. Symptoms can include a high fever, a stiff neck, eyes sensitive to light, vomiting, nausea and chills.

But people can carry the bacteria in their bodies and never get sick with it, Butler said. There's no way to know when the student contracted it, she said.

"It's wicked," Butler said. "Many people who survive have lifelong health problems. But the people who are cured are very lucky."

Fighting meningococcal infection

The bacteria are spread by direct, close contact with saliva, mucous, or droplets from the nose and throat of an infected person, generally through activities such as sharing food or utensils. The bacteria are not spread by breathing the air where someone with the disease has been.

Individuals who had close contact with someone who is infected with meningococcal infection should receive antibiotics to prevent any possible infection. Preventive antibiotics are not recommended for people who were not in close contact with an infected person, but such people should be aware of possible symptoms.

The best defense against meningococcal disease is keeping up to date with recommended immunizations. A vaccine is available to prevent certain strains of meningococcal disease and is routinely recommended for children and adolescents 11 to 18 years of age. Families are encouraged to make sure their preteen and adolescent children are up-to-date on all recommended vaccines, including the meningococcal vaccine.

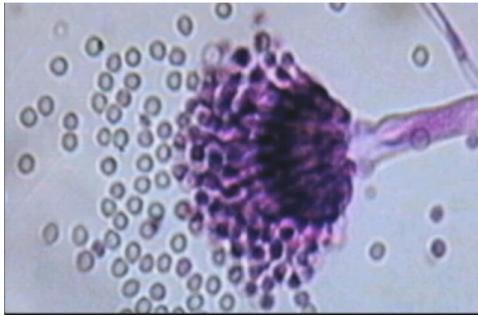
In North Carolina, vaccination of all college students who live on campus in a dormitory is recommended.

Read more here: <http://www.newsobserver.com/2014/02/20/3640454/boy-14-dies-of-apparent-blood.html#storylink=cpy>

TWC News

Several people being treated for possible exposure to rare disease

- **By: Linnie Supall**
- 1:30 PM



CHAPEL HILL- More than a dozen people in Orange County are undergoing treatment after possible exposure to a rare, but deadly disease.

It's called Meningococcal disease, a bacterial infection that took the life of a student at East Chapel Hill High School Wednesday.

"Our nurses have a set of questions they're asking everyone who may have come in contact with the student," said Colleen Bridger, director of the Orange Co. Health Dept.

The disease is passed through saliva and can be contracted from sharing drinks or kissing.

Health officials say 14 people in close contact with the student may have been exposed. They're now taking antibiotics and expected to be OK.

"The time frame to get people started [on antibiotics] is a three day window. We are well within that window," said Bridger.

According to the State Department of Health and Human Services, about 10 percent of people are a carrier of the bacteria, but sometimes this bacteria can infect the bloodstream.

Health experts say getting infected is rare, but vaccines are available to decrease your chances of contracting it. North Carolina has seen an average of 18 cases of meningococcal disease per year with most cases occurring in the late winter and early Spring.

So far this year, seven cases of the diseases have been reported in North Carolina. Health officials haven't identified any links between the cases.

14-Year-Old East Chapel Hill Student Dies Wednesday

By [Ran Northam](#)

Posted February 19, 2014 at 9:16 pm



[Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools](#) spokesperson Jeff Nash says a 14-year-old male student of East Chapel Hill High School died Wednesday, presumably from meningococcal disease.

Nash says at this time it has not been confirmed whether or not he had meningitis at the time of his death. He says the school worked closely with the Orange County Health Department to make sure other students are safe.

East Chapel Hill principal Eileen Tully sent a message to parents informing them of the situation. She shared a letter from health director Colleen Bridger, which included more information about the disease.

According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), symptoms of meningococcal disease include nausea, vomiting, photophobia (increased sensitivity to light), and an altered mental status (confusion). The disease is spread through the exchange of respiratory and throat secretions like saliva. Anyone experiencing symptoms should contact the Orange County Health Department or your personal physician immediately.

Principal Tully plans to meet with students in the morning, according to Nash, and counselors will be available for students.

The health department worked to find a list of close friends of the student and called their families Wednesday night.

Close Contacts Of ECH Student Who Died Being Monitored

By [Ran Northam](#)

Posted February 20, 2014 at 10:24 am



OC Health Department Director Colleen Bridger (L); CHCCS Superintendent Tom Forcella (R)

The Orange County Health Department worked closely with East Chapel Hill High School and the school district shortly after finding out a 14-year-old student at East contracted [meningococcal disease](#) and later died.

“We have given prophylactic antibiotics to 14 contacts at this point,” said [Orange County Health Department](#) Director Colleen Bridger as she addressed the media Thursday morning. “Typically it’s going to be close family members that are the most exposed.”

[Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools](#) Superintendent Tom Forcella joined Dr. Bridger and said the student left school Tuesday after telling the school nurse he felt ill.

“The nurse advised the family to seek medical attention,” Dr. Forcella said. “He thought maybe he just wasn’t feeling well. The nurse contacted the parents and advised them to seek medical attention, and the family did go see either their doctor or a clinic.”

According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), symptoms of meningococcal disease include nausea, vomiting, photophobia (increased sensitivity to light), and an altered mental status (confusion). It is spread through the transmission of respiratory and throat secretions like saliva.

“Meningococcal disease is a generic term that encompasses the different types of illnesses that you can get if you are infected with the bacteria,” Dr. Bridger said. “You’re most commonly, probably, familiar with meningitis, which is when the bacteria gets into the spinal fluid and the brain of the infected individual; that would be meningitis. We

believe we are dealing with a blood infection in this particular case, which is why we'll be referring to it a little bit more generically.”

Dr. Bridger said it's impossible to trace where the student picked up the bacteria.

She said the disease is most commonly seen in adolescents.

“I think 10-15 percent of people who are infected with a meningococcal disease will die,” Dr. Bridger says.

“Another up to 50-percent will suffer life-long consequences of the disease if they do recover. So it's a very, very serious disease. The good news is it's very, very hard to get.”

Anyone experiencing symptoms should contact the Orange County Health Department or your personal physician immediately.

For more information about how East Chapel Hill is handling the situation at the school, [click here](#).



E. Chapel Hill HS student dies from bacterial infection

Posted: Feb 19, 2014 6:00 PM EST Updated: Feb 20, 2014 11:51 AM EST
by WNCN Staff

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. -

A student at East Chapel Hill High School died Wednesday of a bacterial infection, the school system said.

School officials say a 14-year-old student died from what is presumed to be Meningococcal disease.

Meningococcal disease is a bacterial infection caused by the same bacteria that can cause Meningitis.

In a letter to parents, the school said the student may have been infectious at school Feb. 11, 12, 17 and 18.

"If a person is infected, symptoms usually start within three to four days of exposure but can take as long as 14 days to begin," the school said.

The Orange County Health Department said the boy presented the first symptoms on Tuesday.

School official say they do not know how the student contracted the infection. The Center for Disease Control says the infection can be passed directly through saliva as well as "prolonged general contact with an infected person."

The school said the spread of meningococcal disease in a classroom setting is rare.

Dr. Chris Ingram works with Raleigh Infectious Diseases off Lake Boone Trail. He said Wake County will see three or four cases a year.

Ingram said vaccines have brought down the number of infections greatly but outbreaks will occur in closely quartered people.

The Chapel Hill-Carrboro School System the principal plans to speak to students tomorrow morning about this and East Chapel Hill High School will have school nurses and counselors available for students on Thursday.

14 on antibiotics after contact with ECHHS student

Posted: Feb 20, 2014 9:36 AM EST Updated: Feb 20, 2014 11:52 AM EST
by WNCN Staff



CHAPEL HILL, N.C. -

The Orange County Health Department says 14 people who came in contact with an East Chapel Hill High School student who died Wednesday of a bacterial infection are on antibiotics.

MOREAdditional Links

School officials said on Wednesday that a 14-year-old student died from what was presumed to be Meningococcal disease. Meningococcal disease is a bacterial infection caused by the same bacteria that can cause Meningitis.

Orange County Health Director Colleen Bridger said nurses were able to trace the student's contacts and inform those who came in contact with the 14-year-old boy.

In a letter to parents, the school said the student may have been infectious at school Feb. 11, 12, 17 and 18.

"If a person is infected, symptoms usually start within three to four days of exposure but can take as long as 14 days to begin," the school said.

The Orange County Health Department said the boy presented the first symptoms on Tuesday.

Bridger said the disease is not easily spread, and a person would have to come into contact through the infected person's saliva during the infected period.

Bridger said Thursday that it is hard to know where the bacteria came from.

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Published: 2014-02-20 10:07:00

Updated: 2014-02-20 12:18:04

LOCAL NEWS

Officials take precautions after student's death from meningococcal disease

Posted 10:07 a.m. today

Updated 30 minutes ago





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[Chapel Hill student dies from meningococcal disease](#)

[CDC information on meningococcal disease](#)

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. — Fourteen people who may have been exposed to an East Chapel Hill High School student with meningococcal disease are being treated with antibiotics, Orange County Health Department officials said Thursday.

The 14-year-old student died Wednesday, only one day after developing symptoms of meningitis, which is caused by the disease, school officials said.

The infection is passed from person to person through oral and nasal secretions. It is not airborne.

Orange County Health Director Colleen Bridger said Thursday that there is a three-day window of time to get people who may have been exposed antibiotics. It wasn't clear how many of those people may be students at the high school.

"We are well within that window," she said. "We are confident we are going to be able to get in touch with everyone who may have been exposed."

Bridger also said officials may never know what led to the infection in the student. Officials believe the student was exposed between Feb. 11-18.

Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools Superintendent Thomas Forcella said the student visited the school's nurse on Tuesday and was advised to seek medical attention.

School officials sent letters to parents Wednesday warning them to be on the lookout for signs of meningococcal disease.

Signs and symptoms of include:

Severe fatigue

Severe body aches

Severe flu-like symptoms

High fever

Stiff neck

Nausea

Vomiting

Sensitivity to light

Confusion

Counselors and extra nurses were at the school Thursday to help console students.

Chapel Hill student dies from meningococcal disease

Posted 7:22 p.m. yesterday

Updated 10:54 p.m. yesterday



MORE ON THIS

- [CDC information on meningococcal disease](#)

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. — An East Chapel Hill High School student died from meningococcal disease Wednesday.

The infection, which causes meningitis, is passed from person to person through oral and nasal secretions. It is not airborne.

Officials believe the 14-year-old student was exposed between Feb. 11-18. The victim's symptoms developed Tuesday, officials said.

Officials have identified close friends of the victim who may have been exposed.

Signs and symptoms include:

Severe fatigue
Severe body aches
Severe flu-like symptoms

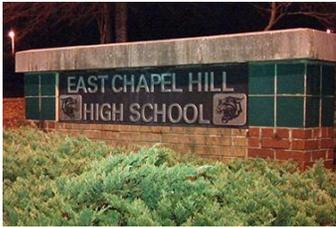
Counselors and extra nurses will be at the school tomorrow to help console students.

WXII 12 (Winston-Salem, Greensboro, High Point)

. NC high school student dies from meningococcal disease

14 people placed on antibiotics

UPDATED 1:24 PM EST Feb 20, 2014



CHAPEL HILL, N.C. —Orange County health officials say a 14-year-old student at East Chapel Hill High School has died from an illness linked to meningitis.

Officials said the student was in school Tuesday and died Wednesday.

Health department officials said the student appears to have died from meningococcal disease that can cause several illnesses, including meningitis.

The child's name has not been released.

The health department sent letters to parents stating transmission of the disease in a classroom setting is rare. The letter says the bacterium can spread when people kiss or share drinks, food or cigarettes.

Health director Colleen Bridger says the student may have been infectious and was in school Feb. 11, 12, 17 and 18.

Fourteen people who may have had contact with the student are being treated with antibiotics.

Read more: <http://www.wxii12.com/news/local-news/north-carolina/nc-high-school-student-dies-from-meningococcal-disease/24582096#ixzz2tuaNmDG>

Flu Deaths Reach 64 in North Carolina

By [Danny Hooley](#)

Posted February 18, 2014 at 1:34 am



NORTH CAROLINA – State health officials reported Friday that seven more people died last week from flu complications, bringing the total number to 64.

Judy Butler, Community Health Services Supervisor for the Orange County Health Department, acknowledges it's been a bad year for the flu in North Carolina, the second-worst in recent memory (107 flu deaths were reported during the swine flu outbreak of 2009-10).

“It looks like from the number of people who were being seen by medical providers for flu-like illnesses, that we are still above where we have been some years at this time,” says Butler.

She confirms the state's number – 64 North Carolinians have died from flu complications so far this year, as of February 8.

Last year, the state reported 59 deaths for the whole season. The flu season typically lasts from November through March.

According to Butler, no Orange County residents are reported to have died of flu this year. She says that while some deaths occurred at UNC Hospitals, those were patients that were transferred from other counties.

Contrary to what a lot of people may believe, extreme weather has little to do with the spread of the flu. But it can be a small factor.

“If someone had had an extreme weather exposure to the point that their immune system was weakened, it would make them more susceptible,” Butler says. “I would not say that the weather contributed beyond the point that you would have had people inside, and closer in proximity to each other.”

The flu season peaks at different times, and this year it's peaking early. In the meantime Butler says it's never too late to get a flu shot.

“They'll be available all the way until they expire, which will be in June,” she says.

She adds that even though some people get the shot and still get sick, that's no reason to dismiss vaccines.

“Flu vaccine's not 100 percent effective,” says Butler. “But it's the best thing there is.”

Plus, she says, those who were vaccinated and got the flu anyway can take heart in knowing that, without the vaccine, it could have been a lot worse.

Ways To Reduce OC Child Poverty: A “Comprehensive Holistic Approach”

By [Rachel Nash](#)

Posted February 6, 2014 at 3:36 pm



Getty Images

ORANGE COUNTY – More than 4,600 children in Orange County were living in poverty in 2001, according to census data. That was almost 18 percent of the total number of children living in the County at the time. A decade later, more than 2,300 additional children were living in poverty.

Dr. Colleen Bridger, Director of the Orange County Health Department, said poverty remains one of the biggest, yet least acknowledged issues in our area.

She discussed possible ways to reduce child poverty at a County Board of Health meeting Wednesday night. Bridger explained that Orange County’s child poverty rate is on trend with the majority of other counties.

“Like in a lot of aggregate statistics, we look better than the State average. The challenge is that we still have families who are living in abject poverty in Orange County, and sometimes aggregate statistics can mask that,” Bridger said.

She added, “When you go back to the stereotype for Orange County, you hear that for example we have the lowest unemployment rate. So people, I think, make the next logical step to say ‘Well, if we have the lowest unemployment rate, then our poverty numbers must not be matching other areas in the State.’ That is just not the case.”

The [Health Department's analysis](#) indicated that there are six prevalent pockets of poverty throughout our area, encompassing 21 of the 29 schools in Orange County.

Many poverty indicators, such as the number of children enrolled in Medicaid and the number of students on free or reduced lunch, have increased in the last five years, both countywide and also in both Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools and Orange County schools.

As of 2011, more than 7,000 children in the county, or 25 percent, were enrolled in Medicaid. More than 30 percent of students enrolled in both school districts received free or reduced lunch.

Long-term Impacts of Child Poverty

Children living in poverty, Bridger explained, are much more likely to experience “adverse childhood events.” Examples include abuse, neglect or a general category of household dysfunction.

“The reason that this is important is because when children are exposed to an adverse childhood event, it structurally affects their brain,” Bridger said.

Research shows that the more adverse events a child experiences will increase the likelihood for chronic diseases, mental health problems, and behaviors that lead to teen pregnancy or the contraction of sexually transmitted diseases.

Bridger said the lasting results of child poverty fall under the jurisdiction of the Health Department.

“Those adverse childhood events are extremely linked to adult public health outcomes that we really want to see changed,” she said.

Possible Solutions

While poverty cannot be eliminated immediately, Bridger said that there are ways to address the problem now and prevent future difficulties in our local children's lives.

“A county government cannot fix poverty. What we can do, however, is mitigate the effects of poverty on children. The only way to do that is through an extremely comprehensive holistic approach.”

The Harlem Children's Zone Project was launched in New York City and promotes positive environments for area children. Bridger said she hopes to launch a program like that here in Orange County.

"One of the biggest successes that it [the Harlem Children's Zone Project] showed relatively quickly is that it literally eliminated the racial disparity in math and reading for children in elementary school," Bridger said.

Durham has a similar program already up and running, called the East Durham Children's Initiative

As part of her larger goal to implement a program like the Harlem's Children's Zone project in Orange County, Bridger will recommend several initiatives at next month's Board of Health meeting.

A component of her proposal is to create a new program manager position to focus on a community dealing with childhood poverty in our area.