



Australian Prescriber



AN INDEPENDENT REVIEW

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CUTTING EDGE INFORMATION ABOUT MEDICINE

One of Australia's major sources of information about medicines, Australian Prescriber, was mailed out to 58,000 health professionals today.

The journal, which is published six times a year, is a national independent review of therapeutic topics, primarily aimed at health professionals. It aims to provide short reviews on a range of topics which will assist readers in their professional duties. Its main strength is that it can comment independently as it contains no advertising.

Among articles of general interest in this issue is an article about meningococcal disease.

MENINGOCOCCAL DISEASE

Meningococcal disease has gained notoriety in recent years because of its sudden onset and often deadly outcomes. Australian Prescriber answers some common questions relating to this disease.

Meningococcal disease is caused by a bacteria. Infection can cause meningitis. The common symptoms are severe headache, vomiting, drowsiness and fever. Some patients develop a distinctive purple rash. These key symptoms have an abrupt onset and a very rapid progression.

Meningococcal disease is a medical emergency. The patient must see a doctor urgently and antibiotics should be given as soon as possible.

The risk of secondary cases of meningococcal disease developing, though low, is greatest in the first week. It is important that all persons who had been in contact with the patient are identified and given treatment to prevent infection.

For information about other topics, including the top 10 drugs used in Australia, go to the Internet version of Australian Prescriber on <http://www.australianprescriber.com>

For a copy of the complete articles or information about Australian Prescriber, contact (02) 6289 7038, or fax (02) 6289 8641, or visit the website at <http://www.australianprescriber.com>

For further information:

For further information about meningococcal disease contact Dr Robert Hall, Director, Communicable Disease Control Branch of the South Australian Department of Human Services, phone (08) 8226 7177.