HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS NOTIFIED TO STOP USING CIPROFLOXACIN FOR BACTERIAL MENINGITIS PROPHYLAXIS

The New York State Department of Health (NYSDH) has notified healthcare services to stop using ciprofloxacin prophylaxis for individuals who have been in contact with patients diagnosed with bacterial meningitis.

Ciprofloxacin has been among the antibiotics recommended for post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) of invasive **meningococcal** disease, a rare but severe infection caused by Neisseria meningitidis.

Following the discovery of an increase in N. meningitidis strains **resistant** to ciprofloxacin over the past 18 months, officials have recommended using rifampicin or ceftriaxone as these are still used as first-line treatments. Treatment recommendations remain unchanged, as starting antibiotic treatment immediately in suspected cases of invasive meningococcal disease is vital.

Additionally, 4 out of 20 isolates of N. meningitidis (20%) collected from patients with meningococcal meningitis in New York State (excluding New York City) in 2023 were resistant to **ciprofloxacin**.

In New York City, 6 (17%) of 35 isolates collected from patients between July 23, 2023, and July 22, 2024, were resistant.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend stopping PEP with ciprofloxacin once at least 2 patients, plus another 20% of patients in a local community, have resistant strains.

According to NYSDH, **azithromycin** can be used as an alternative option for PEP.

Invasive meningococcal disease can cause brain swelling, sepsis, and joint infections, and is fatal in about 15% of cases. Approximately 30 cases are reported annually in New York State.
Adapted after Chris Dall, 15 August 2024