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Seizing… Stiff neck… Bulging fontanels…All of these findings should immediately bring to mind one of the most feared medical maladies: **Meningitis**. There are variations of meningitis, each worse than the next; and high on that "worse than" list is the dreaded meningococcal meningitis and/or meningococcemia (when the bug gets into the blood). This particularly troublesome form of meningitis has some classic characteristics and to help you remember what they are, just remember **B5**!




**1) Big:** Big random rashes (larger than 2 mm) are very possibly bad, especially if the kid looks sick.

**2) Blue:** Big and blue (purply-bruisy looking) rashes are very possibly bad, especially if the kid looks sick.

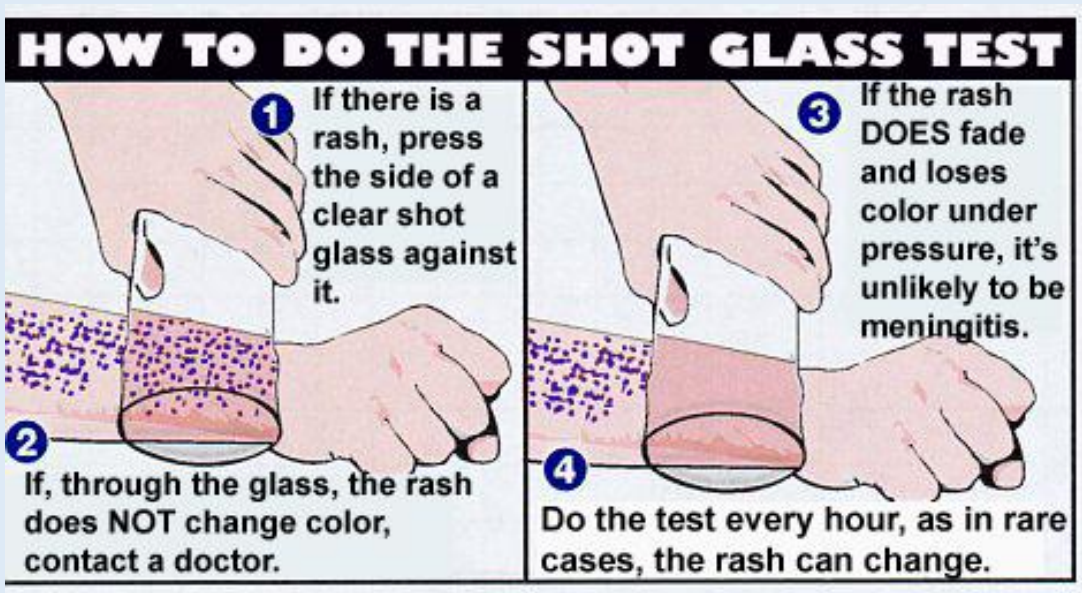
**3) Blotches:** Big blue blotches (no pattern to them) are very possibly bad, especially if the kid looks sick. Nicely formed small circular, or poxy-polka-dot rashes are one thing. Big blue blotches are another.

**4)*That don't* Blanch:** This is a crucial part of **B5**. When you think about blanching, think about capillary refill. If you push on your nailbed and it immediately loses color, that's blanching. (It should also pink up again very quickly indicating adequate perfusion). But, if you push down on one of the big blue blotches and it ***doesn't*** blanch, that's a really bad sign!

**5)*Are* Bad:** The symptoms above add up to meningococcemia (and possibly meningococcal meningitis). In a nutshell, that is really, really bad.

Experience tells us that most petechial (tiny red or blue/purply) rashes are not meningococcal, but, in the interest of patient care, we should consider that they all can be meningococcal until proven otherwise, *especially if the kid looks sick*.

Sometimes life's important concepts can be expressed in a few, easy to remember words. In the case of sick looking kids with rashes… **Big Blue Blotches that don't Blanch are Bad!**







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Contact us to have Scott DeBoer or one of our other pediatric experts present at your next conference.

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