

## Toronto meningitis C alert issued

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STAFF REPORTER – Toronto Star

Toronto Public Health has issued a meningitis C alert after a patron at a local bar became infected and died earlier this week.

Dr. Barbara Yaffe, director of Communicable Disease Control with Toronto Public Health, said the 23-year-old man was at Crews & Tango at 508 Church St. and patrons at the bar on Nov. 17 and Nov. 18 could be at risk.

They can get a free vaccination Friday, Dec. 1 at a community centre at the 519 Church St. between 3 and 7 p.m.

Health officials say there may have been 300 to 500 people inside the bar on those two nights. The alert was issued to reach that specific group of patrons.

"I would like to stress we're not dealing with an outbreak," Yaffe said.

The victim was there for a long period of time so this was not a short exposure, officials said. They are following up with close contacts of the male victim and are not aware of any other cases.

Meningitis affects the central nervous system and can be fatal in 10 to 15 per cent of the cases.

With this recent case of meningitis C, the man was admitted to hospital Nov. 24 and died two days later. Meningitis C was identified the day after his death.

The bacteria can be passed from sharing cigarettes or water bottles or through kissing, officials say. Symptoms can appear within two to 10 days of exposure and include a high fever, severe headache, nausea and a stiff neck.

There were no cases of meningitis C in Toronto last year.