

Haemophilus Influenzae Disease (Hib)



What is Hib Disease?

Hib disease is a serious illness caused by the bacteria Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib). Babies and children younger than 5 years old are most at risk for Hib disease. It can cause lifelong disability and be deadly.

Spread of Disease

Hib bacteria spread when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Usually, the Hib bacteria stay in a person's nose and throat and do not cause illness. But if the bacteria spread into the lungs or blood, the person will get very sick.

Signs and Symptoms

Hib disease causes different symptoms depending on which part of the body it affects.

The most common type of Hib disease is meningitis. This is an infection of the covering of the brain and spinal cord. It causes the following:

- High fever
- Confusion
- Headache or stiff neck
- Light sensitivity
- Lack of appetite and vomiting
- Low alertness

Hib disease can also cause throat swelling making it difficult to breathe as well as causing joint, skin, lung (pneumonia) and bone infections.

Diagnosis

Doctors usually diagnose Haemophilus influenza, including H. Influenzae type b or Hib, infection with one or more laboratory tests. The most common testing methods use a sample of body fluid, such as blood or spinal fluid.

Treatment or Complications

Hib disease is very serious. Most children with Hib disease need care in the hospital. Even with treatment, as many as 1 out of 20 children with Hib meningitis dies. As many as 1 out of 5 children who survive Hib meningitis will have brain damage or become deaf.

People at Risk

H. influenza, including Hib, disease occurs mostly in babies and children younger than 5 years old. Adults 65 years or older, American Indians, Alaska Natives, and people with certain medical conditions are also at increased risk.

Prevention

The best way to protect against Hib disease is by getting the Hib vaccine. Doctors recommend that all children get the vaccine.

The Hib vaccine:

- Protects child from Hib disease, which can cause lifelong disability and be deadly.
- Provides protection from the most common type of Hib disease, meningitis (an infection of the tissue covering the brain and spinal cord).
- Lessens the potential for sick child missing school or parent or guardian missing work caring for sick child.

Doctors recommend children receive four doses of the Hib vaccine for the best protection at each of the following ages:

- **2 months**
- **4 months**
- **6 months (for some brands)**
- **12 – 15 months**

The Hib vaccine is very safe, and it is effective at preventing Hib disease. Vaccines, like any medicine, can have side effects. Most children don't have any side effects from the vaccine.

To further prevent spread of disease, encourage frequent handwashing using warm, running water and scrub with soap for 20 seconds minimum. Hand sanitizer is not a substitute for frequent handwashing. Wash hands after using bathroom, diapering, touching hands, face or hair, before and frequently during food preparation. Clean and sanitize food contact surfaces and high touch areas (tables, chairs, desks, tray lines, key pads, and toys).



For more sources of information on this topic visit:

ST. CLAIR COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT www.scchealth.co

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES www.michigan.gov/mdhhs

TALK TO HEALTH CARE PROVIDER – OR – VISIT www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents