

Haemophilus Influenzae Type b (Hib) Vaccine

Communicable Disease Control – Factsheet

Vaccination has saved more lives in Canada in the last 50 years than any other medical intervention. Vaccines help your immune system to recognize and fight bacteria and viruses that cause diseases.

What is the Hib Vaccine?

The Hib vaccine protects against Hib disease which can cause serious infection and can sometimes be fatal.

Hib disease is caused by the bacteria *Haemophilus influenzae* type b. There are many different types of *Haemophilus influenzae* bacteria. This vaccine protects only against type b which causes most of the severe infections in children. Hib disease can lead to infections of the lungs (pneumonia), joints (septic arthritis) and the covering of the brain (meningitis). It is most common in children under five years of age.

The Hib vaccine is approved by Health Canada and is provided free by Manitoba Health as part of your child's routine immunizations. The vaccine does not contain any live bacteria so it cannot cause Hib disease.

How is Hib disease spread?

Hib bacteria live in fluids in the throat. It can be spread from person to person by coughing, sneezing, or sharing food or drinks. Most people who carry the bacteria do not get sick, but they can still spread it to other people.

Babies and young children under five are at higher risk of becoming sick. Children may become infected by sharing soothers, bottles or toys that have been in the mouths of other children.

Why should my child get the Hib vaccine?

Vaccination is the best way to protect your child against Hib disease.

When your child is immunized you also help protect others, because someone who is vaccinated is less likely to spread infection.

Who should get the Hib vaccine?

All infants and children between two months and five years of age (up to 59 months) should get the Hib vaccine.

This vaccine can be given alone, but it is usually given as part of another vaccine called the 5-in-1. The schedule for your child depends on the age when they are first vaccinated. For more information, talk to your public health nurse or doctor.

If your child has already been sick with Hib disease before they were two years old, they are still at risk for infection and should get the Hib vaccine.

Adults and children five years of age and older may also need to be vaccinated with Hib if they have one or more of the following:

- no spleen, or a spleen that is not working properly
- lung transplant or stem cell transplant
- a cochlear implant or waiting for one
- Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) infection
- antibody defects
- protein wasting syndrome
- cancer of the blood or lymph nodes

Who should NOT get the Hib vaccine?

Speak with a public health nurse or doctor if your child has had a serious reaction to a previous dose of any vaccine, or if your child has any severe allergies.

Your child should not get vaccinated if they have a high fever. But they can still get the Hib shot if they have a mild illness, like a cold.

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Possible side-effects of the Hib vaccine.

Vaccines are known to be very safe. It is much safer for your child to get this vaccine than to get Hib disease.

Common reactions to the vaccine include soreness, redness and swelling where the vaccine was given. Some children may have fever, drowsiness, fussiness, loss of appetite or an upset stomach. These are mild reactions and usually only last one to two days. Acetaminophen (Tylenol® or Temptra®) can be given for fever or soreness.

ASA (Aspirin®) should NEVER be given to children because it can cause a severe liver and brain disease called Reye's Syndrome.

It is important to stay in the clinic for 15 minutes after getting any vaccine because there is a rare possibility of a severe allergic reaction. This can include hives, difficulty breathing, or swelling of the throat, tongue or lips. If this happens after you leave the clinic, **call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department for immediate treatment.**

Other very rare side-effects that have been reported include swelling and blueness of the legs and convulsions. These reactions occur in one out of every 10,000 vaccinations.

Report any serious or unexpected side effects to a public health nurse or doctor.

For more information on Hib vaccine:

Talk to your doctor or public health nurse.

Call Health Links-Info Santé in Winnipeg at 788-8200; toll-free elsewhere in Manitoba 1-888-315-9257.

Or visit:

Manitoba Public Health website
www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/atoz.html

Canadian Pediatric Society website
www.cps.ca/English/HealthCentres/immunization.htm