



HAEMOPHILUS INFLUENZAE **TYPE b (Hib)**

What is *Haemophilus influenzae* type b disease?

Haemophilus influenzae (Hib) is a serious disease caused by bacteria. It is most common in young children. Before the Hib vaccine, it was the leading cause of bacterial meningitis among children. Hib can also cause swelling in the airways and lead to suffocation. Hib can infect the lungs, blood, joints, bones, and the thin membrane that covers the heart.

How is Hib disease spread?

Hib disease spreads by contact with mucus or droplets from the nose and throat of an infected person. In other words, it is spread through the air after an infected person coughs or sneezes, especially if he or she does not cover his mouth or nose.

Who gets Hib?

Infants and young children, household contacts, and daycare classmates are at the highest risk of getting Hib.

What are the symptoms of Hib disease?

Hib disease usually causes fever, nausea and vomiting. Persons with Hib disease may become irritable or sluggish. The bacteria can infect different parts of the body, so other symptoms may occur.

How long is an infected person able to spread Hib disease?

An infected person can spread Hib disease for as long as the bacteria are present in the nose and throat, even if they appear to be well or after 1 to 2 days of treatment with an antibiotic.

What is the treatment for Hib disease?

Antibiotics are used to treat serious infections.

How can the spread of Hib disease be stopped?

Hib vaccine is recommended for all children starting at 2 months of age. Hib vaccine is recommended for all children less than 5 years of age who have not been previously immunized, and is required if they attend child care/preschool centers. Others may need Hib vaccine if they have risk factors for Hib disease. The Hib vaccine is available at the health department or from a doctor's office.

Should people who have been around a person infected with Hib disease be treated? All those who live in the same house with a child who has Hib disease (except for pregnant women) may need a drug called rifampin to prevent getting or spreading Hib, including people who have been previously vaccinated. Children and employees in child care settings who have been exposed to a Hib case may also need rifampin. Check with your doctor or the health department for advice.