

## Haemophilus Influenzae Type b (Hib)



### What is Hib?

Hib is a bacteria that lives in the nose and/or throat. Sometimes Hib does not cause illness, but other times the bacteria can break through the body's defenses. The Hib bacteria can lead to other diseases that may infect the lungs, blood, joints, bones, throat, and coverings of the heart, brain, and spinal cord.

### History.

Before 1987, Hib was the leading cause of bacterial meningitis (an infection of the brain and spinal cord coverings that can lead to brain damage and deafness). Each year, about 20,000 children under age 5 had Hib and nearly 1,000 of them died.

### Signs and Symptoms.

Different symptoms come from the different illnesses that Hib can cause. Some of the main signs to watch out for are fever, vomiting, weakness, and a stiff neck. Other symptoms can include a change in behavior and having a hard breathing or swallowing.

### Transmission.

Hib is spread from person to person by sneezing, coughing, or talking closely with someone who has Hib.

### Treatment.

Hib can be treated with antibiotics, which should be started immediately. Hospitalization is generally needed for infants and antibiotic treatment usually lasts for 10-14 days. People

with Hib are encouraged to avoid contact with other people to prevent spreading the disease.

#### Hib Today.

Today there are very few people who get Hib in the U.S. There were only 341 cases between 1996 and 2000 and the disease has been reduced by 99% in the U.S. The number of Hib cases has dropped because of the vaccine that came out in 1987. Now, only 1 in 100,000 children get Hib every year. However, if people were to stop getting the Hib vaccine, the disease could easily make a comeback.

Below is a link to the recommended series of the Hib vaccine.