



# Haemophilus Influenzae Type B (HIB) Vaccine

Getting vaccinated is the best way to protect against some very serious infections. **The Canadian Paediatric Society and the National Advisory Committee on Immunization** strongly recommend routine vaccination. Hib vaccine protects children from serious diseases like meningitis caused by the Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib) germ. It is recommended for use in infants and children younger than five years. It is also used for persons beyond five years of age who have specific medical conditions.

## What is Haemophilus influenzae type B (Hib) bacteria?

Even though “influenzae” is part of its name, the Hib bacteria does not cause influenza or the flu. Hib infections are much more serious.

Before the Hib vaccine was used, the Hib bacteria was a common cause of serious infections in children. More than half of all children with Hib infection developed meningitis. Meningitis is a serious infection of covering of the brain and spinal cord. Meningitis can cause brain damage, learning and developmental problems, deafness and blindness. One out of 30 children with meningitis can die.

Hib bacteria also causes a serious infection of the throat near the voice box. This infection is called epiglottitis. This can make it difficult for the child to breathe. Hib bacteria can also cause infection of the lungs (pneumonia) and bone and joint infections.

Children under five years are more likely to get Hib disease. Children attending child care centres are even more likely to catch it. Hib bacteria spreads to others through coughing and sneezing. Many people carry the Hib bacteria without any signs or symptoms of disease, but they can pass it on to others.

## How well does the vaccine work?

The vaccine protects around 90% of persons who get all their needles against serious Hib infections. It will not prevent meningitis caused by other bacteria or viruses.

## At what age should the vaccine be given?

Your child should have the first needle at two months of age. Three more needles are needed – at four months, six months and 18 months of age.

## What if a needle is missed?

Your child should get the next needle as soon as possible. If your child did not get the first needle at two months of age, your doctor will recommend a special “catch-up” schedule. Children between 15 months and five years of age who have never been vaccinated will need only one needle of the Hib vaccine. Your doctor will advise you about the required needles.

## Is the vaccine safe?

Yes. Some children may have mild pain, swelling and redness for a few days at the spot where the needle was given. A very few children may get a mild fever or rash.

## When should I call my doctor?

Call your doctor if your child has any of the following within 3 days of getting the needle:

- High fever (over 40°C or 104°F).
- Convulsions or seizures.
- Very pale colour and serious drowsiness.
- Hives.
- Swelling of the face or mouth.
- Trouble breathing.
- Other serious problems.

## Who should not get the vaccine?

The doctor may decide not to give your child's needle if your child has:

- A high fever or serious infection worse than a cold.
- A serious allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) to this vaccine.
- A severe allergy to any component of the vaccine.

## Record of Protection

After your child receives any vaccination, make sure the doctor/nurse updates your copy of the vaccination record card. In addition, please report the vaccination given to the Public Health Unit.

For more information, please contact a member of the Vaccine Preventable Disease Team by calling the Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit at 519-426-6170 or 905-318-6623

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