

About...*Haemophilus influenzae* type b

What is *Haemophilus influenzae* type b disease?

Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib) disease is a bacterial illness that may cause serious infections, including meningitis (an infection of the coverings of the spinal cord and brain), blood infections, pneumonia, arthritis, and infections in other parts of the body, in young children. In some instances, Hib disease may cause death.

What are the symptoms of Hib disease?

Hib disease usually causes high fever, irritability, aching, tiredness, and sometimes nausea and vomiting. Because the bacteria can infect different parts of the body, other symptoms may occur. The incubation period for Hib disease is thought to be very short, 2-4 days.

How is Hib disease spread?

Hib disease is spread by contact with mucus or droplets from the nose and throat of an infected person. This can happen when an infected person coughs or sneezes near someone else or someone touches objects contaminated with nose or throat drainage. Infected persons can spread Hib disease as long as the bacteria are present in the nose and throat, even after they appear to be well.

How do I know if I have Hib disease?

See your health care provider. Since the development of new Hib vaccines in 1990, the number of reported cases in children under 5 years of age in the United States has drastically declined. Many other diseases can have the same symptoms as Hib disease.

How is Hib disease treated?

Since Hib disease is a bacterial infection, it can be treated with the appropriate antibiotics. Household contacts and playmates under age 4 of children with the disease may need to take antibiotics to prevent infection.

How can Hib disease be prevented?

The Hib vaccine is safe and highly effective in preventing serious disease in young children and is included in the recommended childhood and adolescent immunization schedule. See your health care provider to determine if you or your child should receive Hib vaccine.

For additional information on Hib disease, please visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Web site at: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/hib/in-short-adult.htm> .

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