



Hib Disease

(*Haemophilus influenzae* type b)

What is Hib disease?

Hib (*Haemophilus influenzae* type b) is one type of the bacteria *Haemophilus influenzae*. It is not the same as the flu, which is a virus. Hib used to be a very common disease in children less than five years of age, but now that a vaccine is available, Hib is rare.

How is Hib disease spread?

Hib can be spread from one person to another by coughing or sneezing, or by contact with mucus or fluids from the nose and throat of a person with Hib.

What are the symptoms of Hib disease?

Persons that are sick with Hib usually have a high fever, stiff neck, stiff back, tiredness, and sometimes nausea and vomiting. In some people, Hib can cause pneumonia, ear infections, blood infections, or meningitis. Sometimes Hib disease may cause death.

How long can a person spread Hib disease?

A person can spread the disease for as long as the germs are living in the nose and throat, even if they are not sick. A person can no longer spread the germs after taking the right medication.

Can a person get Hib disease more than one time?

No, a person cannot get Hib disease more than one time. There are other types of *Haemophilus influenzae* that can also cause people to get sick, but it won't be from type b (Hib).

What is the treatment for Hib disease?

Antibiotics are prescribed by a physician to treat Hib.

Should people who have spent time near a person sick with Hib disease get medication?

Sometimes people who spent time near a person sick with Hib may need to get an antibiotic to protect them from getting the disease. The health department investigates all persons with Hib to find close, personal contacts who may need the medication. Persons who have had casual contact with someone with Hib such as in a classroom, office, or factory setting usually do not need medication.

Should people who have been near a person sick with another type of *Haemophilus influenzae* receive medication?

No, medication is not needed for contacts to other types of *Haemophilus influenzae*.

Is there a vaccine to prevent Hib disease?

Yes, several vaccines are available for children to prevent Hib disease and should be given to all children starting at 2 months of age. Contact your doctor or local health department for information about the vaccine and where your child can get it.