

# Haemophilus Influenzae Type B (Hib) Vaccine

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

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

Before the Hib vaccine was used, the Hib germ was a common cause of serious infections in children. Hib was the most common cause of bacterial meningitis in children two months to five years of age. Meningitis is a serious infection of the fluid and lining that covers the spinal cord. Meningitis can cause brain damage, learning and developmental problems, deafness and blindness. One out of 20 children with meningitis can die and serious disability (nerve damage, deafness) occurs in about 15 per cent.

The Hib germ 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. The Hib germ can also cause infection of the lungs (pneumonia) and bone and joint infections.

The Hib germ spreads to others through coughing and sneezing. Children under five years are more likely to get Hib disease. Children attending childcare centres are even more likely to catch it.

## Who should get the vaccine?

Hib vaccine is recommended for use in infants and children younger than five years.

## Hib Vaccine

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. This vaccine is usually given to infants and children as part of the Pediacel vaccine. It is rarely given on its own.

If your child did not receive immunizations according to the routine schedule, your health care provider 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

The vaccine protects around 95 per cent of children who get all their needles against serious Hib infections. It will not prevent meningitis caused by other germs.

## Who should not get the vaccine?

- Anyone who has had a severe reaction to previous dose of Hib vaccine
- Anyone with an allergy to tetanus toxoid, sucrose, trometamol
- A high fever or serious infection worse than a cold

## Side effects

Most reactions are mild and include soreness, swelling and redness for a few days at the spot where the needle was given. Some children get a fever, rash, lose their appetite or are fussy or drowsy for a day or two after the needle.

## When should I seek medical attention?

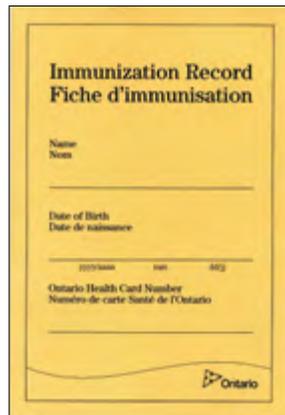
Severe reactions are rare. If you develop hives, swelling of the face or mouth, trouble breathing, serious drowsiness or other serious problems seek immediate medical attention.

## Your record of protection

After any immunization, ensure your personal immunization record or “yellow card” is updated. Keep it in a safe place.

## Questions?

Talk to your health care provider or contact Public Health at 519-575-4400.



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