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Hib Vaccine



1. What is Hib disease?

Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib) disease is a serious disease caused by bacteria. It usually strikes children under 5 years old.

Your child can get Hib disease by being around other children or adults who may have the bacteria and not know it. The germs spread from person to person. If the germs stay in the child's nose and throat, the child probably will not get sick. But sometimes the germs spread into the lungs or the bloodstream, and then Hib can cause serious problems.

Before Hib vaccine, Hib disease was the leading cause of bacterial meningitis among children under 5 years old in the United States. Meningitis is an infection of the brain and spinal cord coverings, which can lead to lasting brain damage and deafness. Hib disease can also cause:

- pneumonia
- severe swelling in the throat, making it hard to breathe
- infections of the blood, joints, bones, and covering of the heart
- death

Before Hib vaccine, about 20,000 children in the United States under 5 years old got severe Hib disease each year and nearly 1,000 people died.

Hib vaccine can prevent Hib disease.

Many more children would get Hib disease if we stopped vaccinating.

2. Who should get Hib vaccine and when?

Children should get Hib vaccine at:

- 2 months of age
- 4 months of age
- 6 months of age*
- 12-15 months of age

*Depending on what brand of Hib vaccine is used, your child might not need the dose at 6 months of age. Your doctor or nurse will tell you if this dose is needed.

If you miss a dose or get behind schedule, get the next dose as soon as you can. There is no need to start over.

Hib vaccine may be given at the same time as other vaccines.

Older Children and Adults

Children over 5 years old usually do not need Hib vaccine. But some older children or adults with special health conditions should get it. These conditions include sickle cell disease, HIV/AIDS, removal of the spleen, bone marrow transplant, or cancer treatment with drugs. Ask your doctor or nurse for details.

3. Some people should not get Hib vaccine or should wait

- People who have ever had a life-threatening allergic reaction to a previous dose of Hib vaccine should not get another dose.

- Children less than 6 weeks of age should not get Hib vaccine.
- People who are moderately or severely ill at the time the shot is scheduled should usually wait until they recover before getting Hib vaccine.

4. What are the risks from Hib vaccine?

A vaccine, like any medicine, is capable of causing serious problems, such as severe allergic reactions. The risk of Hib vaccine causing serious harm or death is extremely small.

Most people who get Hib vaccine do not have any problems with it.

Mild Problems

- Redness, warmth, or swelling where the shot was given (up to 1/4 of children)
- Fever over 101°F (up to 1 out of 20 children)

If these problems happen, they usually start within a day of vaccination. They may last 2-3 days.

5. What if there is a moderate or severe reaction?

What should I look for?

Any unusual condition, such as a serious allergic reaction, high fever or behavior changes. Signs of a serious allergic reaction can include difficulty breathing, hoarseness or wheezing, hives, paleness, weakness, a fast heartbeat, or dizziness within a few minutes to a few hours after the shot.

What should I do?

- Call a doctor, or get the person to a doctor right away.
- Tell your doctor what happened, the date and time it happened, and when the vaccination was given.
- Ask your doctor or nurse, to report the reaction by filing an Adverse Event form.

7. How can I learn more?

- Ask your doctor or nurse