



HAEMOPHILUS INFLUENZAE, TYPE B (Hib)

What is HAEMOPHILUS INFLUENZAE, TYPE B (Hib) disease?

Before the development of the Hib vaccine in 1988, Hib was the leading cause of serious bacterial meningitis in young children. Hib can cause several diseases such as meningitis (inflammation of the coverings of the spinal column and brain), blood stream infections, pneumonia, arthritis and infections of other parts of the body.

Who gets Hib disease?

Hib disease can occur at any age. Since the introduction of the Hib vaccine, Hib is seen more commonly in the elderly, unvaccinated or incompletely vaccinated children, and people with weakened immune systems.

How is Hib disease spread?

Hib disease may be spread from person to person through contact with mucus or droplets from the nose and throat of an infected person.

What are the symptoms of Hib disease?

Symptoms include fever, nausea and vomiting, as well as other symptoms depending upon the part of the body affected.

How soon do symptoms appear?

The incubation period for Hib disease is unknown and widely variable.

When and for how long is a person able to spread Hib disease?

The contagious period varies. If an ill person is not treated, Hib disease may last for as long as the bacteria is present in the nose and throat, even after symptoms disappear.

Does past infection with Hib disease make a person immune?

No. Children can get Hib disease more than once. The Hib conjugate vaccine prevents future infections.

What is the treatment for Hib disease?

Health care providers prescribe antibiotics to treat Hib infections. Rifampin is used to treat people who have had close, prolonged contact with a person with Hib disease.

What are the possible complications of Hib disease?

Hib disease can appear in several forms. The most common is meningitis. Some children with meningitis may have long lasting neurological problems. In some cases, death may occur.

What can be done to prevent Hib disease?

The Immunization Practices Advisory Committee (ACIP) recommends that all infants receive Hib conjugate vaccine beginning at 2 months of age.