



Haemophilus Influenzae type b (Hib) vaccine

**Keep your child safe.
Get all vaccines on time.**

By getting all the vaccines on time, your child can be protected from many diseases over a lifetime.

Immunization has saved more lives in Canada in the last 50 years than any other health measure.

What is the Hib vaccine?

The Hib vaccine protects against infection from the bacteria *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib). Despite its name, this disease is not the same as influenza (the flu).

Health Canada approved the Hib vaccine and is providing it free as part of your child's routine immunizations.

Call your health care provider to make an appointment.

Who should get the Hib vaccine?

Children between 2 months and 59 months of age (under 5 years) should get the Hib vaccine. It is usually combined with other vaccines such as diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, hepatitis B and polio. For more information, see the following HealthLinkBC Files:

- [HealthLinkBC File #105 Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis, Hepatitis B, Polio, and Haemophilus influenzae type b \(DTaP-HB-IPV-Hib\) vaccine](#)
- [HealthLinkBC File #15b Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis, Polio and Haemophilus influenzae type b \(DTaP-IPV-Hib\) vaccine](#)

Some people 5 years of age and older with certain medical conditions are at high risk of Hib infection. The vaccine is free to people who have:

- No spleen or a spleen that is not working properly
- Sickle cell disease
- An immune system weakened by disease or medical treatment
- An islet cell or solid organ transplant, or a cochlear (inner ear) implant, or are waiting for one
- Had a stem cell transplant

It is important to keep a record of all immunizations received.

What are the benefits of the Hib vaccine?

The Hib vaccine is the best way to protect against Hib infection, a serious and sometimes fatal disease. When you get immunized, you help protect others as well.

What are the possible reactions after the vaccine?

Vaccines are very safe. It is much safer to get the vaccine than to get sick with *Haemophilus influenzae* type b.

Common reactions to the vaccine may include soreness, swelling or redness at the injection site. Some children may have a fever or experience drowsiness, fussiness, vomiting, diarrhea, persistent crying and loss of appetite.

Acetaminophen (e.g. Tylenol®) or ibuprofen* (e.g. Advil®) can be given for fever or soreness. ASA (e.g. Aspirin®) should not be given to anyone under 18 years of age due to the risk of Reye Syndrome.

*Ibuprofen should not be given to children under 6 months of age without first speaking to your health care provider.

For more information on Reye Syndrome, see [HealthLinkBC File #84 Reye syndrome](#).

It is important to stay in the clinic for 15 minutes after getting any vaccine. There is an extremely rare possibility, less than 1 in a million, of a life-threatening allergic reaction called anaphylaxis. This may include hives, difficulty breathing or swelling of the throat, tongue or lips. Should this reaction occur, your health care provider is prepared to treat it. Emergency treatment includes administration of epinephrine (adrenaline) and transfer by ambulance to the nearest emergency department. If symptoms develop after you leave the clinic, call **9-1-1** or the local emergency number.

It is important to always report serious or unexpected reactions to your health care provider.

Who should not get the Hib vaccine?

Speak with a health care provider if you or your child has had a life-threatening reaction to a previous dose of Hib vaccine or to any part of the vaccine.

There is no need to delay getting immunized because of a cold or other mild illness. If you have any concerns speak with your health care provider.

What is *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib) infection?

Hib infection is caused by the bacteria *Haemophilus influenzae* type b. It usually infects children under 5 years of age with most infections occurring in children less than 2 years of age.

Hib can cause serious and life-threatening infections including meningitis, an infection of the lining that covers the brain. It can also cause septicemia, an infection of the blood. For every 20 children who get sick, 1 may die. Permanent complications of infection include brain damage and deafness.

Hib bacteria can also cause a serious and life-threatening infection in the throat called epiglottitis. A child with this infection may have severe difficulty breathing and may need an emergency operation to help breathe.

How is Hib infection spread?

You can spread Hib infection by coughing, sneezing or close face-to-face contact. It also spreads through saliva when people kiss or share things such as food, utensils and drinks. Babies and children can become sick through sharing soothers, bottles or toys used by other children.

Hib disease is now rare in B.C. because of routine childhood immunization programs.

Mature Minor Consent

It is recommended that parents or guardians and their children discuss consent for immunization. Children under the age of 19, who are able to understand the benefits and possible reactions for each vaccine and the risk of not getting immunized, can legally consent to or refuse immunizations. For more information on mature minor consent, see [HealthLinkBC File #119 The Infants Act, Mature Minor Consent and Immunization](#).

For more HealthLinkBC File topics, visit www.HealthLinkBC.ca/health-library/healthlinkbc-files or your local public health unit. For non-emergency health information and advice in B.C. visit www.HealthLinkBC.ca or call **8-1-1** (toll-free). For the deaf and hard of hearing, call **7-1-1**. Translation services are available in more than 130 languages on request.