

Haemophilus influenzae type b



The continued occurrence of preventable childhood diseases emphasizes the necessity of vaccination for all children. Regular medical care includes vaccinations, which are an important part of your child's total health care.

This brochure explains why it's important to make sure your child is vaccinated on time. Without protection provided by the Hib conjugate vaccines (*Haemophilus influenzae* type b conjugate vaccines), your child could suffer from serious illnesses that could have been prevented.

What is this disease?

Haemophilus influenzae type b is a germ (or bacterium) that can cause several kinds of dangerous infections in children. It is very different from the "flu" (influenza virus).

Why are the *H influenzae* vaccines so important for infants?

These vaccines provide protection during the first years of life, when it is easiest for your child to get *H influenzae* type b infection. When children are fully immunized with the *H influenzae* type B vaccine, they are protected against the illnesses caused by the *H influenzae* type b germ.

Without timely immunizations, your child faces the risk of becoming very sick with serious diseases such as:

- Meningitis, a serious infection of the covering of the brain and spinal cord. Before the vaccine was used, *H influenzae* type b was the most common cause of bacterial meningitis in the United States. It caused about 12,000 cases of meningitis each year in children younger than 5 years of age—especially in babies 6 to 12 months old. Of those children infected, 1 in 20 died from this disease, and 1 in 4 developed permanent brain damage.
- Epiglottitis, a dangerous throat infection that can cause a child to choke to death if not treated immediately.
- Pneumonia and serious infections in the blood, bones, joints, skin, and the covering of the heart.

When should my child get the Hib conjugate vaccines?

The immunization schedule will vary depending on which vaccine your child receives and at what age the series was started. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that your child receive two or three doses of the vaccine between 2 to 6 months of age and a booster dose at 12 to 15 months. Your child's pediatrician will tell you about the different Hib vaccines available and the recommended immunization schedule for each.

Are there side effects to Hib conjugate vaccines?

Most children have no side effects with the Hib conjugate vaccines. There have been no serious reactions linked to these vaccines. Those side effects that sometimes occur are mild and temporary. The possible side effects include:

- Soreness, swelling, or redness where the shot was given
- A mild to moderate fever
- Fussiness

These symptoms may begin within 24 hours after the shot is given and usually go away within 48 to 72 hours.

Talk to your pediatrician about the possible reactions to these immunizations and when to call his or her office for more details. As with any medical problems, call your doctor promptly if you are concerned.

Other information...

Your pediatrician can tell you more about other vaccines your child needs to stay healthy.

Immunizations have provided protection for children for years—but the vaccines only work if *you* make sure your child gets immunized.

Remember...your child's health depends on it!

Immunization is just one important part of preventive health care for children. The American Academy of Pediatrics, representing the nation's pediatricians, is dedicated to working toward a better future for our children. Join us by making sure your children receive the best possible health care.

The information contained in this publication should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations in treatment that your pediatrician may recommend based on individual facts and circumstances.

From your doctor

American Academy
of Pediatrics



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The American Academy of Pediatrics is an organization of 57,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical subspecialists, and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the health, safety, and well-being of infants, children, adolescents, and young adults.

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