

Hib Vaccine to Prevent Haemophilus influenzae type B

Manitoba
Health
Public Health



C O M M U N I C A B L E D I S E A S E C O N T R O L

Why do we immunize?

Only one generation ago, Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib) infections, caused many deaths every year in Canada. Before the Hib vaccine was available, there was little you could do to protect yourself from getting these serious infections.

Now, very few Canadians get sick or die from these serious infections because we use the Hib vaccine. Vaccines are also called needles, baby shots or immunizations. Vaccines help your immune system learn how to recognize and fight the germs that cause diseases. They are the best way to protect against this and other deadly diseases.

In countries where they do not routinely use vaccines, these infections still affect millions of people and cause thousands of deaths. Haemophilus influenzae type b infections could become common in Canada again, if we stop immunizing with Hib vaccine.

What is Hib?

Hib bacteria, or germs, are spread by:

- coughing,
- sneezing, or
- close face-to-face contact with an infected person.

Hib causes serious infections, such as:

- meningitis, an infection of the covering of the brain; and
- pneumonia, an infection of the lungs.

One child of every 20 children under age five who has a Hib infection, dies from the disease. One of every four with meningitis suffers permanent brain damage or deafness.

Before we started using the Hib vaccine in Canada:

- about one in every 200 children got some form of serious Hib infection before age five;
- about 2,000 people became sick every year with Hib infections; and
- about 1,000 of these people were sick with meningitis.

Since vaccination began in 1988, the number of cases each year has dropped by 90 per cent.

Who should get the vaccine?

Hib disease is especially dangerous for young children and people with high-risk health problems. The following groups should get the Hib vaccine:

- all children under five years of age, and
- anyone who has a high-risk health problem, such as:
 - cancer of the blood or lymph nodes;
 - bone marrow or organ transplantation;
 - Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) infection;
 - antibody defects;
 - protein wasting syndrome;
 - no spleen or a spleen that does not work well because of sickle-cell disease, inflammatory bowel disease, celiac disease, thalassemia, lupus or low platelets of an unknown cause; or
 - alcoholism.

Will the Hib vaccine protect you?

When the Hib vaccine is given in the recommended number of shots, it protects about 90 of every 100 children against serious Hib infections. It is unknown how well the Hib vaccine protects adults who are at high risk.

When should the Hib vaccine be given?

The vaccine is given in a series of four injections to children between the ages of two and 18 months, at the same time as other childhood immunizations.

Children should get the Hib vaccine at:

- two months of age;
- four months of age;
- six months of age; and
- 18 months of age.

Your child must get the needles at the recommended ages to get the best protection. Children five years and older do not need the Hib vaccine, unless they have a high-risk medical condition.

Adults with high-risk conditions should receive the Hib vaccine as recommended by their doctor or public health nurse.

Manitoba's Childhood Immunization Schedule

Age	DaPTP*	Hib*	MMR	HBV	Td
2 months	X	X			
4 months	X	X			
6 months	X	X			
12 months			X		
18 months	X	X			
5 years	X		X		
Grade 4				XXX	
14-16 years					X
Every 10 years					X

*DaPTP and Hib are given as "one needle"

D or d – diphtheria
 aP – acellular pertussis (whooping cough)
 T – tetanus
 P – polio
 Hib – Haemophilus influenzae type B
 M – measles (red measles)
 M – mumps
 R – rubella (german measles)
 HBV – hepatitis B

In Manitoba, immunization is voluntary.

What are the side effects?

The Hib vaccine has been shown to be safe. But as with any medicine, minor side effects sometimes occur.

For a day or two after getting the needle, your child may:

- have a slight fever,
- be cranky or fussy,
- feel drowsy, and
- not want to eat.

In children and adults, soreness, swelling or redness can occur at the spot in the arm or leg where the needle is given. A cold, damp cloth can help to ease the pain.

If your child develops a fever:

- keep the room temperature at 18° C (64° F);
- keep your child lightly dressed (unless the child is shivering);
- have your child rest;
- give your child lots of clear fluids; and
- give acetaminophen, also called Tylenol or Tempra, as directed on the bottle.

Note: Acetylsalicylic acid, such as ASA or aspirin, must NOT be given to children.

In rare cases, more serious side effects can happen. These include:

- temporary blueness and swelling of the legs, sometimes with a rash, when the injection is given in the leg. This happens in about one in 10,000 immunizations;
- high fever over 40° C (104° F);
- seizures or convulsions;
- paleness, limpness or drowsiness;
- severe allergic reactions, also called anaphylactic shock, such as:
 - hives,
 - wheezing,
 - being short of breath, or having difficulty in breathing,
 - swelling of the face, mouth, or throat.

Always report any of these more serious reactions to your doctor or public health nurse.

Who should not get the Hib vaccine?

Your doctor or public health nurse may decide not to give the injection in the following situations:

- If you or your child has a high fever or serious infection worse than a cold. The immunization will be postponed and given another day.
- If you or your child has had a severe allergic reaction, or anaphylactic shock, to a previous dose of DaP/TP/Hib or Hib vaccine.
- If you or your child has a severe allergy to tetanus protein or any other materials in the vaccine.

All *severe* allergies should be reported to the doctor or public health nurse before any vaccine is given.

Your record of protection

Make sure the doctor or public health nurse updates your Immunization Record card after you receive an immunization. Keep it in a safe place!

For more information

Talk to your doctor, public health nurse or call Health Links in Winnipeg: 788-8200 or toll-free: 1-888-315-9257.

