

## Haemophilus Influenzae Type b (Hib) Vaccine

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

By getting all shots 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 Hib vaccine?

The Hib vaccine protects against infection from a germ (bacteria) called *Haemophilus influenzae* type b or Hib. Despite its name, this disease is not the same as influenza or the "flu". The vaccine is approved by Health Canada.

The Hib vaccine is provided free as part of your child's routine immunizations. Call your public health nurse or doctor to make an appointment.

### Who should get the Hib vaccine?

Children between 2 and 59 months of age (under 5 years) should get the Hib vaccine. It is usually combined with other vaccines such as tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis, and polio vaccines. For more information, see BC HealthFile [#15b Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis, Polio, Haemophilus influenzae Type b \(DTaP-IPV-Hib\) Vaccine](#).

Some people over 5 years of age with certain medical conditions are at high risk of getting sick from Hib infection.

A dose of the vaccine is provided 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.

### Benefits of Hib Vaccine

The Hib vaccine is the best way to protect your child against Hib infection, a serious and sometimes fatal disease.

When you get your child vaccinated, you help protect others as well.

### 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 include fever, and soreness, redness and swelling where the shot was given.

Acetaminophen or Tylenol® can be given for fever or soreness. ASA or Aspirin® should NOT be given to anyone under 20 years of age due to the risk of Reye Syndrome.

It is important to stay in the clinic for 15 minutes after getting any vaccine because there is an extremely rare possibility of a life-threatening allergic reaction called anaphylaxis. This may include hives, difficulty breathing, or swelling of the throat, tongue or lips. If this happens after you leave the clinic, call 911 or the local emergency number. This reaction can be treated, and occurs in less than one in a million people who get the vaccine.

**Report serious or unexpected reactions to your public health nurse or doctor.**

### Who should not get the Hib vaccine?

Speak with a public health nurse or doctor if your child has had a life-threatening reaction to a previous dose of Hib vaccine, or any component of the vaccine.

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

Hib infection is caused by a germ (or bacteria) called *Haemophilus influenzae* type b. It usually infects children under 5 years of age. Babies 6 to 12 months of age were at higher risk of infection before vaccination against the disease started.

Hib can cause serious and life-threatening infections including meningitis, an infection of the lining that covers the brain, and septicemia, an infection of the blood. For every 20 children who get sick, one will 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.

Hib infection is spread by coughing, sneezing or close face-to-face contact. It can also be spread through saliva or spit when people kiss or share things like 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 BC because of routine childhood vaccination programs.

For more BC HealthFile topics visit [www.bchealthguide.org/healthfiles/index.stm](http://www.bchealthguide.org/healthfiles/index.stm), or visit your local public health unit.

Call the BC NurseLine to speak to a registered nurse, available 24-hours every day:

- In Greater Vancouver, call 604-215-4700
- In BC, call toll-free 1-866-215-4700
- Deaf and hearing-impaired, call 1-866-889-4700
- Pharmacist available 5pm to 9am every day
- Translation services in over 130 languages upon request.

Visit BC HealthGuide OnLine – a world of health information you can trust at [www.bchealthguide.org](http://www.bchealthguide.org)



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