



CALHOUN COUNTY

Public Health Department

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Fact Sheet

Haemophilus Influenzae Type B (Hib)

What is Haemophilus influenzae type B (Hib)?

Hib is a name for any illness caused by *H. influenzae* bacteria. The bacteria can cause a variety of diseases, including ear infections, blood infections, meningitis (inflammation of the lining of the brain), pneumonia, and arthritis. The bacteria do not cause influenza.

Since the introduction of the Hib vaccine in 1987, cases have declined by 99% in infants and young children. Before the use of an effective vaccine, Hib was the most common cause of bacterial meningitis in children. In the United States, Hib disease occurs primarily in under-immunized children and infants too young to receive the vaccine.

Who gets Hib disease?

Anyone can get Hib infection, but it is most common in children under the age of 5 years and adults 65 years or older. Those with weakened immune systems are also at increased risk for Hib.

How is Hib disease spread?

Hib disease is spread by contact with droplets of mucus from the nose and throat of an infected person. The infected individual can spread the droplets through coughing or sneezing. People that are asymptomatic but carry the bacteria in their respiratory tract can still spread the bacteria.

The contagious period varies and, unless treated, may persist for as long as the organism is present in the nose and throat, even after symptoms have disappeared.

What are the symptoms of Hib disease?

Symptoms generally appear less than ten days after exposure, commonly within two to four days. Fever is present in all forms of Hib infection. Other symptoms of Hib depend on the part of the body affected. Hib can result in sinus infections, earaches,

and skin infections. Hib may also cause serious illnesses like pneumonia, bloodstream infections, and meningitis.

Symptoms of pneumonia usually include:

- Fever and chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Sweating
- Chest pain
- Headache
- Muscle pain or aches
- Excessive tiredness

Symptoms of bloodstream infection usually include:

- Fever and chills
- Excessive tiredness
- Pain in the belly
- Nausea with or without vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Anxiety
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Altered mental status (confusion)

Symptoms of meningitis typically include sudden onset of:

- Fever
- Headache
- Stiff neck
- Nausea with or without vomiting
- Increased sensitivity to light
- Altered mental status (confusion)

Babies with meningitis may:

- Be irritable
- Vomit
- Feed poorly
- Appear to be slow or inactive
- Have abnormal reflexes

How is Hib disease diagnosed?

Hib infections are usually diagnosed through a blood or spinal fluid sample.

What is the treatment for Hib disease?

Hib infections are treated with antibiotics. Patients are no longer contagious after taking the antibiotics for one to two days.

Other treatments may include breathing support, medication to treat low blood pressure, and/or wound care.

Are there complications from Hib disease?

Hib disease is very dangerous. Most children with Hib disease need care in the hospital.

Even with appropriate treatment, Hib can cause long-term impairments or death. Even with treatment, as many as 1 out of 20 children with Hib meningitis dies. As many as 1 out of 5 children who survive Hib meningitis will have brain damage or become deaf.

How can Hib disease be prevented?

All children should be immunized with the Hib vaccine beginning at approximately two months of age. Most people over 5 years old do not need the Hib vaccine. However, you should discuss getting the vaccine with your physician if you or your child have sickle cell anemia or a weakened immune system.

Close contact with a person infected with Hib may require immediate preventative antibiotics depending on circumstances.

How do I get more information on Hib disease?

Calhoun County Public Health Department

Phone: 269-969-6383

 www.facebook.com/CCPublicHealthDepartment/

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Phone: 800-232-4636 (800-CDC-INFO)

Website: www.cdc.gov/hi-disease/index.html

Spanish: <https://www.cdc.gov/hi-disease/about/types-infection-sp.html>

Haemophilus influenzae

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This fact sheet is meant to provide general health information and is not intended to be medical advice or otherwise take the place of your doctor's orders or to diagnose your specific health problems. Check with your doctor if you have any questions or concerns about your health.