

HAEMOPHILUS INFLUENZAE Type B

What is Haemophilus influenzae, type b (Hib) disease?

Hib may cause serious bacterial infections in young children. Hib may cause a variety of diseases such as meningitis (inflammation of the coverings of the spinal column and brain), blood stream infections, pneumonia, arthritis, epiglottitis and infections of other parts of the body.

What are the symptoms of Hib?

Symptoms generally appear in less than 10 days after exposure, commonly within 2 to 4 days. Fever, vomiting, listlessness and a stiff neck or back are some common symptoms. Other symptoms depend upon the part of the body affected.

How is Hib spread?

Hib disease may be spread through contact with mucus or droplets from the nose and throat of an infected person.

How long are people contagious?

The contagious period varies and, unless treated, may last for as long as the bacteria are present in the nose and throat, even after symptoms have gone away. A person can no longer spread Hib disease after taking antibiotics for one day.

Who gets Hib disease?

Hib disease is most common in children 3 months to 3 years old. Hib disease is less common in persons over 5 years old.

What treatment is available for people with Hib?

Antibiotics are used to treat Hib infections.

Do infected people need to be kept home from school, work or daycare?

People who have Hib will most probably be in the hospital. Persons infected with Hib can spread the bacteria until 24 hours after initiation of appropriate antibiotics.

How can I protect myself and my family from getting Hib?

- All children should be vaccinated against Hib beginning at approximately 2-months of age.
- If you have been in close contact with the ill person, preventive medication is only recommended in specific instances. For example, preventive treatment with an antibiotic is recommended for household members when there is at least one unvaccinated child under 4-years old in the home.
- You should also wash hands well and often with soap and water and teach children to wash their hands too. (Sanitizing gel may be substituted when hands are not visibly soiled.)
- Always cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze, and then wash your hands.