

# Haemophilus influenzae type b Vaccine

Vaccines have saved more lives compared to any other medical intervention. Vaccines help the immune system recognize and fight bacteria and viruses that cause serious diseases

## Haemophilus influenzae type b is a vaccine preventable disease.

- **Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib)** bacteria cause infections, mostly in children under 5 years and immune compromised people.
- Despite its name, this disease is not the same as influenza or the "flu".
- Hib bacteria are spread by coughing, sneezing and close face-to-face contact.
- Hib causes serious and life-threatening infections of the blood (septicemia), the throat (epiglottitis) and the lining that covers the brain (meningitis).
- A child with epiglottitis has severe difficulty breathing and may need an emergency operation called a tracheotomy to help them breathe.
- Even with treatment, 1 in 20 children could die from Hib meningitis.

## How can Hib infection be prevented?

- Be immunized. When you / your child are immunized, you help protect others as well.
- Practice good hygiene (e.g. handwashing).
- Cover your mouth when coughing and your nose and mouth when sneezing to prevent direct contact with droplets from the nose or throat.

## Who can get this vaccine for free?

Individuals 5 years and older with the following medical conditions:

- Have no spleen, a spleen that is not working properly or sickle cell disease.
- Received a cochlear (inner ear) implant or are waiting for one.
- HIV infection.
- Have acquired complement deficiency.
- Have a congenital immune system disorder (including complement, properdin, factor D deficiency, primary antibody deficiencies).

- Immunosuppression from medical therapy or current disease (e.g. active cancer, Hodgkin's disease, leukemia, lymphoma, myelodysplasias, congenital immune deficiency).
- Are solid organ transplant candidates or recipients.
- Are islet cell transplant candidates or recipients.
- Had a hematopoietic stem cell transplant.

NOTE: For young children, Hib vaccine is combined with other vaccines such as tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough) and polio. These are given as a series of injections.

## Who should not get this vaccine?

- Persons who have a serious acute illness, with or without a fever, should delay immunizations.
- People who had a life-threatening reaction to a previous dose of a Hib-containing vaccine, or any components of the vaccine.

## What are common reactions to this vaccine?

- **Vaccines are very safe. It is much safer to get the vaccine than to get this serious and life-threatening disease.**
- Temporary pain, redness and swelling where the needle was given.
- Fever, drowsiness, or a loss of appetite.
- These mild reactions generally last 1 to 2 days.
- Only treat a fever (at least 6 to 8 hours after immunization) if you or your child are uncomfortable, refusing fluids and not sleeping.

Use **Acetaminophen** (all ages; Tylenol®, Tempra®) or **Ibuprofen** (6 months & older; Advil®, Motrin®) to treat fevers and pain. **Never give ASA** (Aspirin®) to children younger than 18 years old because of the serious risk of Reye's 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. This reaction can be treated, and occurs in less than one in one million people who get the vaccine. **If this happens after you leave the clinic, get medical attention or call 911 right away.**

## Who should you report reactions to?

- Report any adverse or unexpected reactions to your local public health nurse, your doctor, nurse practitioner or 811 as soon as possible..

## Talk to a public health nurse:

- If you have questions or concerns about you or your child's reaction to an immunization.
- If you or your child had to go to a doctor, a hospital or to a health centre with a symptom that might be related to immunization.

## What does this vaccine contain?

**Act-HIB®** contains purified polyribosylribitol phosphate capsular polysaccharide (PRP) of *Haemophilus influenzae* type b bound to tetanus protein, tris (hydroxymethyl) aminomethane, sucrose, sodium chloride. Thimerosal-free. Latex-free.

## Mature Minor Consent

It is recommended that parents/guardians discuss consent for immunization with their children. Efforts are first made to get parental/guardian consent for immunizations. However, children at least 13 years of age up to and including 17 years of age, who are able to understand the benefits and possible reactions for each vaccine and the risks of not getting immunized, can legally consent to or refuse immunizations in Saskatchewan by providing mature minor informed consent to a healthcare provider.

Provincial immunization fact sheets are available at [www.saskatchewan.ca/immunize](http://www.saskatchewan.ca/immunize).

**For more information contact your local public health office, your physician, nurse practitioner, HealthLine online or by calling 811.**

**References:** [Canadian Immunization Guide](#). Act-HIB® 2023 product monograph.