

Haemophilus influenzae type b Vaccine

Vaccines have saved more lives in Canada in the last 60 years than any other medical intervention. Vaccines help your immune system to recognize and fight bacteria and viruses that cause diseases

Haemophilus influenzae type b is a vaccine preventable disease.

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

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).

Who can get this vaccine for free?

People 5 years of age and older who have/are:

- Asplenia (functional or anatomical).
- Cochlear implant recipients.
- HIV infection.
- Humoral immune system deficiencies.
- Immunosuppression from medical therapy or disease (e.g. cancer, Hodgkin's disease, leukemia, lymphoma, myelodysplasias, congenital immune deficiency).
- Transplant recipients, including bone marrow, solid organs, islet cells and stem cells.

- NOTE: For young children, *Haemophilus influenzae* type b 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 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 soreness, redness and swelling at the injection site.
- 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** your child is uncomfortable, refusing fluids and not sleeping.

Acetaminophen (Tylenol, Tempra) may be given for fever or soreness. ASA (Aspirin) must NOT be given to anyone younger than 18 years old because of 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 one million people who get the vaccine.

Who should you report reactions to?

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

HIBERIX® contains purified polyribosyl-ribitol-phosphate capsular polysaccharide of Hib covalently bound to tetanus toxoid, lactose, sodium chloride and water for injection. 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.

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

References: Product monographs (Act-HIB® 2019; HIBERIX® 2019).