

# Haemophilus influenzae Type B

## Information Sheet

### **What is Haemophilus influenzae type b?**

Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib) is a kind of bacteria. It is not related to Influenza, or the “Flu”. Hib is the most common cause of Meningitis in children under 5 years of age. Hib also causes Epiglottitis, a form of croup, which can threaten a child’s breathing. In addition, Hib can cause other serious diseases like blood poisoning, pneumonia and other types of infection.

### **What are the symptoms?**

Symptoms vary depending upon the part of the body affected.

**Hib Meningitis:** symptoms can include fever, vomiting, stiff neck, headache, drowsiness

**Hib Pneumonia:** symptoms can include chest pain, coughing, chills, fever, difficulty breathing, coughing up green phlegm, sweating

**Hib Epiglottitis:** symptoms can include sore throat, fever, difficulty breathing, difficulty swallowing, drooling

### **How is it spread?**

Hib is spread through direct contact with mucus or droplets from the nose and throat of an infected person.

### **What is the incubation period?**

The incubation period is unknown, but probably 2 to 4 days.

### **How is Hib diagnosed and treated?**

Hib can be diagnosed through cerebrospinal fluid and/or blood tests. Antibiotics are generally used to treat infections.

### **Is there a vaccine to prevent infection?**

Yes. The Hib vaccine is part of routine childhood immunization given at 2, 4, 6 and 18 months of age. Children under age 5, children in daycare, Native and Inuit children, and immune suppressed people are at highest risk for getting Hib infections. An unvaccinated child has a 1 in 200 chance of getting a Hib infection before the age of 5.