

HAEMOPHILUS INFLUENZAE DISEASE (Hib)

Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib) was the most common cause of bacterial meningitis among infants and young children until an effective vaccine became available in the late 1980s. Hib also can cause other serious illnesses, but it is not related to influenza or “stomach flu”. The most common infections caused by Hib are meningitis, cellulitis, epiglottitis, pneumonia and arthritis. These are invasive conditions. Examples of non-invasive infections caused by Hib are otitis media and sinusitis. Children, ages 2 and under are most likely to develop these infections, although those up to age 5 are still at some risk.

CAUSE: *Haemophilus influenzae* type b bacteria

SPREAD: Through secretions and droplets from the nose and throat (e.g., coughing, sneezing). Healthy people, including adults, may carry these bacteria in their noses and throats.

INCUBATION: Unknown, probably about 2 to 4 days from the time a person is exposed until symptoms develop.

CONTAGIOUS PERIOD: Until 24 to 48 hours after effective treatment begins.



Until the child has been treated and is well enough to participate in normal daily activities. Rifampin should be given to the child prior to discharge from the hospital to assure that Hib has been eliminated.



REPORTABLE!

Provider: This disease is reportable to the health department. In Douglas County, call 444-7214. Outside Douglas County call your local or state health department.

Parents/guardians: inform your child care provider if your child has this illness.



Prevention Control

1. Vaccines for Hib have been available since 1985. In 1991, a newer version of vaccine was licensed for use in children as young as two months of age. As of 1993, the Nebraska State law requires proof that a child in a child care setting is protected by age-appropriate protection against *Haemophilus influenzae* type b.
2. An antibiotic called rifampin is sometimes given after exposure to prevent infection. When two or more cases of *Haemophilus influenzae* type b invasive disease have occurred within 60 days and unimmunized or incompletely

immunized children attend the child care facility, administration of rifampin to all attendees and supervisory personnel is recommended. When a single case has occurred the advisability of rifampin prophylaxis in exposed susceptible child care groups is not usually recommended. Unvaccinated or incompletely vaccinated children younger than 2 should be given a dose of conjugate vaccine after exposure consistent with age appropriate guidelines. Rifampin is not recommended if you are or may be pregnant. Discuss possible side effect with your doctor.

3. **Diagnosis and Treatment:** Haemophilus disease is caused by bacteria and it can be treated with antibiotics. Untreated Hib disease can be fatal. See your doctor at the first signs of Hib disease, and get treatment immediately to prevent death or lasting damage.



For more information, you or your physician may call the Douglas County Health Department at 444-7214, or your local health department.