

Haemophilus Influenzae Type B (HIB)

HIB - The Disease

What is Haemophilus Influenzae Type B?

Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib) is one of six related types of bacterium. In 2000, H.influenzae type B (Hib) was estimated to have caused two to three million cases of serious disease, notably pneumonia and meningitis, and 450 000 deaths in young children.

How is Hib spread?

The Hib bacterium is commonly present in the nose and throat. Bacteria are transmitted from person to person in droplets through sneezing, coughing. Infected children may carry Hib bacteria without showing any signs or symptoms of illness, but they can still infect others. The risk of disease is highest for children between six months and two years of age.

What are the signs and symptoms of Hib?

Pneumonia and meningitis are the most important diseases caused by Hib bacteria. In developing countries, pneumonia is more common than meningitis in children with Hib disease. Hib disease should be suspected in the case of any child with signs and symptoms of meningitis or pneumonia.

What are the complications of Hib?

Children who survive Hib meningitis may develop permanent neurological disability, including brain damage, hearing loss, and mental retardation. 15% to 30% of children who survive Hib disease are at risk for these disabilities. 5% to 10% cases of Hib meningitis are at risk of dying.

What is the treatment for Hib?

Hib disease can be treated with specific antibiotics

How is Hib prevented?

Several Hib conjugate vaccines are available. All are effective when given in early infancy, and have virtually no side effects except occasional temporary redness or swelling at the injection site. To reduce the number of injections, Hib vaccine is sometimes given in combination vaccines, DTP-HepB+Hib.

Droplets through sneezing, coughing. Infected children may carry Hib bacteria without showing any signs or symptoms of illness, but they can still infect others. The risk of disease is highest for children between six months and two years of age.