

Hib immunisation

Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib) was once the most common cause of life threatening infection in children under five. Despite its name, Hib is not a form of influenza (flu). Children under five should receive several doses to protect them from Hib.

Hib causes a number of serious problems

If your child is not immunised and contracts Hib, they could develop:

- Infections of the membrane covering the brain (meningitis).
- Inflammation of the flap at the top of the windpipe (epiglottitis), which can block a child's breathing.
- Joint infection.
- Infection of the tissue under the skin, usually on the face.

These conditions can develop very quickly. If left untreated, your child could die very rapidly.

Children under five should be immunised

Children under five should receive several doses of the Hib vaccine to protect them from Hib. Children should be given the Hib vaccine at:

- Two months
- Four months
- 12 months.

Children over five years of age rarely develop Hib.

Hib vaccine

Pedvax HIB is the recommended vaccine for all Australian children. In Victoria, this is combined with hepatitis B in the vaccine COMVAX, which is recommended at two, four and 12 months.

Hib vaccines are very safe

Serious reactions to Hib vaccine have not been reported.

Mild reactions include:

- Mild swelling, redness and pain at the injection site. This occurs in up to five per cent of children.
- Fever and irritability. These are uncommon.

Reducing fever and soreness

You can help prevent injection site soreness and fever by:

- Giving your child extra fluids to drink
- Not overdressing your child
- Placing a cold, wet cloth over the sore injection spot.

Pre-immunisation checklist

Before immunisation, tell your doctor or nurse if your child:

- Is unwell
- Has ever had a serious reaction to any vaccine or if they have allergies.

Where to get help

- Your doctor
- Your local Maternal and Child Health centre
- Your local council's immunisation coordinator.

Things to remember

- Babies and children under five years of age should be immunised against Hib.
- Without immunisation, your child could die from Hib.
- Three doses of the vaccine are required before your child is protected.

This page has been produced in consultation with, and approved by, the Public Health Division of the Department of Human Services, Victoria. The Better Health Channel is part of the Department of Human Services, Victoria.

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