

## **Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib)**

The continued occurrence of preventable childhood diseases emphasizes the necessity of vaccination for all children. Regular medical care includes vaccinations, which are an important part of your child's total health care.

*Haemophilus influenzae* type b is a germ (or bacterium) that can cause several kinds of dangerous infections in children. It is **NOT** “the flu” (influenza virus).

H influenzae vaccines provide protection during the first years of life, when it is easiest for your child to get *H influenzae* type b infection. When children are fully immunized with the vaccine, they are protected against the illnesses caused by the *H influenzae* type b germ.

Without timely immunizations, your child faces the risk of becoming very sick with serious diseases caused by Hib such as:

- Meningitis, a serious infection of the covering of the brain and spinal cord. Before the vaccine was used, *H influenzae* type b was the most common cause of bacterial meningitis in the United States. It caused about 12,000 cases of meningitis each year in children younger than 5 years of age— especially in babies 6 to 12 months old. Of those children infected, 1 in 20 died from this disease, and 1 in 4 developed permanent brain damage.
- Epiglottitis, a dangerous throat infection that can cause a child to choke to death if not treated immediately.
- Pneumonia and serious infections in the blood, bones, joints, skin, and the covering of the heart.

### **Immunization Schedule**

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that your child receive two or three doses of the Hib vaccine between 2 to 6 months of age and a booster dose at 12 to 15 months.

### **Side effects to Hib conjugate vaccines**

Most children have no side effects with the Hib conjugate vaccines. There have been no serious reactions linked to these vaccines. Those side effects that sometimes occur are mild and temporary. The possible side effects include:

- Soreness, swelling, or redness where the shot was given
- A mild to moderate fever
- Fussiness

These symptoms may begin within 24 hours after the shot is given and usually go away within 48 to 72 hours.

If you suspect there is a serious problem with your child following this immunization, please call our office. Your child will be examined and treated if necessary.