

## Haemophilus influenzae type B vaccine (Hib)

Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib) disease is a serious disease caused by a bacteria. It usually strikes children under 5 years old. Your child can get Hib disease by being around other children or adults who may have the bacteria and not know it. If the germs stay in your child's nose and throat, your child probably will not get sick. But sometimes the germs spread into the lungs or the bloodstream, and then Hib can cause serious problems. Before the vaccine, Hib disease was the leading cause of **bacterial meningitis** among children under 5 years old in the United States. Meningitis is an infection of the brain and spinal cord coverings, which can lead to lasting brain damage and deafness. Hib disease can also cause:

- pneumonia
- epiglottitis, a severe swelling in the throat, making it hard to breathe
- infections of the blood, joints, bones, and covering of the heart
- death

Before Hib vaccine, about 20,000 children in the United States under 5 years old got severe Hib disease each year and nearly 1,000 died.

The Hib vaccine can be given starting at 6 weeks of age. The number of doses recommended to achieve full immunization varies depending on the age of the child.