

***Haemophilus influenzae* Information Sheet**

What is *Haemophilus influenzae* Disease (H. flu)?

Haemophilus influenzae, or H. flu, is a bacteria which causes moderate to severe infections. One type of H. flu, *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib), causes severe disease, especially in infants and young children, and can result in permanent disability or death. ***Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib) is a vaccine-preventable illness.**

How can you catch *Haemophilus influenzae*?

H. flu is passed from person to person through fluids from the mouth and nose. Coughing, sneezing, kissing, or sharing drinks, eating utensils, and cigarettes are common ways the bacteria spreads.

What are the signs and symptoms of *Haemophilus influenzae*?

Many people carry H. flu bacteria in their nose or throat but do not become ill. However, some people develop infections that can cause moderate (non-invasive H. flu) to serious illness (invasive H. flu).

Non-invasive H. flu can cause:

- Ear Infection
- Bronchitis
- Eye inflammation or infection
- Sinus inflammation

Invasive H. flu can cause:

- Pneumonia (lung infection)
- Meningitis (infection of the covering of the brain and spinal cord)
- Bacteremia (blood infection)
- Epiglottitis (severe throat tissue swelling that can sometimes prevent breathing)
- Septic arthritis (infection of the joints)

How can you be treated for *Haemophilus influenzae* Disease?

Haemophilus influenzae disease, including Hib disease, is treated with antibiotics prescribed by a doctor. Invasive H. flu disease usually requires hospitalization.

How can you prevent *Haemophilus influenzae* Disease?

The best way to prevent Hib is through vaccination. Hib vaccine should be given to children starting at age 2 months to protect them. It is important for all children to complete the recommended doses of Hib vaccine. If you are unsure whether your child has received this vaccine, check with your child's healthcare provider. There are no vaccines for strains of H. flu other than Hib. As with many other respiratory illnesses, it is important to avoid persons who are coughing and sneezing, and wash your hands often.