

# Hib

Does your child need a Hib  
booster immunisation?



**i**mmunisation

the safest way to protect your child

If your child was born between 13 March 2003 and 3 September 2005 they will probably have missed out on an important immunisation.

A catch-up campaign is being organised so your child can get the extra protection they need against the illnesses caused by Hib infection, which include blood poisoning (septicaemia), meningitis and pneumonia.

For most children this booster will be given at the same time as the routine pre-school immunisation, so a separate appointment will not be required.

This leaflet briefly describes Hib and the booster immunisation that will be used to protect your child. It explains why your child is being offered this extra protection now, and tells you what you need to do to make sure your child doesn't miss out on the immunisation.

## What is Hib?

*Hib* is an infection caused by *Haemophilus influenzae* type b bacteria. It can lead to a number of major illnesses such as blood poisoning (septicaemia), pneumonia and meningitis. The Hib vaccine only protects your child against the type of meningitis caused by *Haemophilus influenzae* type b bacteria – it does not protect against any other type of meningitis.

The illnesses caused by Hib can kill if they are not treated quickly. Before the Hib vaccine was introduced, there were about 800 cases of Hib in young children every year.



## What is a booster immunisation?

Booster immunisations increase the protection already provided by a primary immunisation. Sometimes the protection offered by a primary immunisation begins to wear off after a time. A booster dose extends the period of protection.

## Why does my child need this booster now?

Your child needs the Hib booster now because they fall into an age group of children that missed out on it because of changes to the routine childhood immunisation programme. (See opposite for details)

Your child will be offered a Hib booster during the latest catch-up campaign, which starts on 10 September 2007 and runs until 3 March 2009.



## Background to the catch-up campaign

The Hib vaccine, introduced in 1992, dramatically reduced the incidence of Hib. But from 1999–2002 there was a small but significant increase in the number of cases. A catch-up Hib booster programme in 2003 reduced the incidence of the infection but not to the very low levels seen previously. Then in September 2006, important improvements were made to the routine childhood immunisation programme:

- pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV) was added at two and four months, with a booster at 15 months of age
- the timing of MenC immunisations changed to three and four months with a booster at 12 months of age
- a Hib booster, combined with the MenC booster, was introduced at 12 months of age.

This means children born on or after 13 March 2003 would have been too young for the 2003 Hib booster campaign (aimed at children from six months to four years of age). Children born before 3 September 2005 would have been too old to have received the newly introduced Hib booster at 12 months of age.

## When will my child be offered the Hib booster?

Most children who have missed out will be offered their Hib booster as part of their pre-school immunisation, so a separate appointment or a separate injection will not be needed. Your child will also have their second MMR injection at the same appointment, as usual.

## What is the pre-school booster that will be given to my child?

The pre-school booster used for this campaign is very similar to the current pre-school booster, but also contains the Hib booster.



## What if my child has already had their pre-school booster?

If your child has already had their pre-school immunisation, they should be sent a separate appointment for a Hib-containing vaccine. They will receive the Hib booster combined with another vaccine – MenC (the Hib/MenC vaccine).

## My child is over four years of age and still hasn't had their pre-school booster. Will they be offered a Hib booster?

Yes, they will be offered the pre-school immunisation that contains the Hib booster.

## Will there be any side effects after the immunisation?

Your child may have redness, swelling or tenderness where they had the injection. In some children this can be quite a large area of swelling. This usually settles down after a few days. If you think your child has had any other reaction to the injection and you are concerned about it, talk to your doctor, practice nurse or health visitor.

## What if my child is ill on the day of the immunisation?

If your child has a minor illness without a fever, such as a cold, they should have their immunisations as normal.

If your child is ill with a fever, put off the immunisation until they have recovered. This is to avoid the fever being associated with the vaccine, or the vaccine increasing the fever your child already has.

If your child:

- has a bleeding disorder, or
- has had a fit not associated with fever

Speak to your doctor, practice nurse or health visitor before your child has any immunisation.

## Does my child have to have this catch-up immunisation?

In the UK, parents can decide whether or not to have their children immunised. Immunisation is recommended because it gives your child protection against serious diseases, most of which can kill.

Around the world, many children are now routinely protected with vaccines. Because of this, some of the world's most serious diseases may soon disappear.



## Where can I get more information about pre-school immunisations?

If you want more information or advice on any aspect of immunisation, speak to your doctor, practice nurse or health visitor. You can also visit the national immunisation website at [www.immunisation.nhs.uk](http://www.immunisation.nhs.uk) and the immunisation section at the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) website, [www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/phealth](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/phealth)

Or you can pick up the leaflet *Immunisation for pre-school children three to five years old* from your surgery or clinic or you can view it on the DHSSPS website mentioned above.





Department of  
**Health, Social Services  
and Public Safety**

[www.dhsspsni.gov.uk](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk)

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