Haemophilus influenzae Type b (Hib) Disease

What is *Haemophilus influenza* type b disease?

Haemophilus influenza type b (Hib) is a very serious bacterial infection in young children. *Haemophilus influenzae* bacteria can affect many different organ systems of the body, causing meningitis (swelling of the tissues covering the brain and spinal cord), pneumonia, and blood, bone, skin, ear, throat or joint infections.

How do you get Hib disease?

Hib spreads from person to person in droplets from coughing or sneezing. Those at greatest risk of getting Hib disease are unimmunized children, 6 months to 5 years old, who live in crowded housing or who attend day-care facilities. Older children and adults are generally not at risk for Hib infection.

What are the symptoms of Hib disease?

The symptoms of Hib disease vary but often include fever, vomiting, fatigue, and a stiff neck. Other symptoms depend upon which part of the body is affected.

When do symptoms start?

The symptoms usually start 2 to 4 days after exposure to the bacteria.

For how long is a person contagious for Hib disease?

If left untreated, the person is contagious for as long as the bacteria remain in the nose and throat. Proper treatment with antibiotics can reduce the time one is contagious.

What is the treatment for Hib disease?

A doctor can prescribe antibiotics to treat Hib infections. Hospitalization is often required to treat severe Hib infections.

Is there a vaccine for Hib?

Yes. The Hib vaccine is recommended for all children in Hawaii. Children should receive the Hib vaccine at 2, 4 and 6 months of age, with a booster at 12-15 months.

How can you keep from getting it?
The best way to prevent children from getting Hib disease is to get them vaccinated on time.

For more information, see the CDC's website at
http://www.cdc.gov/Features/HibDisease