Hib

DOES YOUR CHILD NEED A HIB BOOSTER IMMUNISATION?

immunisation
the safest way to protect your child
If your child was born between 13 March 2003 and 3 September 2005 they will probably need an extra immunisation.

A catch-up campaign is being organised so your child can get the extra protection they need to protect them against the diseases caused by Hib infection such as blood poisoning (septicaemia), meningitis and pneumonia.

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

This leaflet briefly describes Hib disease and the vaccine that is being used to protect against it, explains why your child is being offered this extra protection and 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 the *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 are given to increase the protection already given 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 later into life.

Why does my child need this booster now?
Your child needs this immunisation now because they fall into an age group of children who missed out on their Hib booster immunisation. This was because they were either too young to be part of the 2003 Hib booster campaign or too old when a Hib booster immunisation at 12 months of age was added to the childhood programme in September 2006.

So why is this being done now? What is the background to this catch-up campaign?
In 1992, the introduction of Hib vaccine produced a dramatic fall in Hib disease. Between 1999 and 2002 there was a small but significant increase in the number of cases. A catch-up programme in 2003 stopped this increase but didn’t reduce the incidence of the disease to the very low levels previously seen.
Then, in September 2006, changes were made to the routine childhood immunisation programme:

- pneumococcal conjugate vaccine was added to the schedule at two, four and 12 months of age
- the timing of when the meningitis C vaccine was given was changed from two, three and four months of age, to three, four and 12 months of age, and
- a Hib booster immunisation, combined with the MenC vaccine, was introduced at 12 months of age.

So, if your child was born on or after 13 March 2003 they would have been too young for the 2003 Hib booster campaign (which was aimed at children from six months to four years of age). And, if they were born before 3 September 2005, they would have been too old to have received the newly introduced Hib booster at 12 months of age.

Therefore, these children will be part of the catch-up campaign that starts on 10 September 2007 and they will be offered a Hib booster dose during the course of the campaign that runs until March 2009.

When will my child be offered the Hib booster?
Most children will receive their Hib booster at the same time they get their pre-school immunisation so a separate appointment will
not be needed. The Hib vaccine is part of the pre-school booster so only one injection will be given. 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 being used for this campaign is very similar to the current pre-school booster, but also contains a 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. This will be given as a Hib vaccine combined with another vaccine – Men C (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 same Hib-containing vaccine as the younger children when they are called for their pre-school booster.

**Will there be any side effects to the vaccine?**
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 within 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. Vaccination 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.