

Children's Health

Take Action—

Get Your Child A Hib Booster Vaccination Now

Talk To Your Health-Care Professional To Reduce Your Child's Risk

(NAPSA)—No parent wants their child to play catch-up, and making sure that your child is up-to-date on their Hib (*Haemophilus influenzae* type b) vaccination is no exception. Since June 2009 when the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reinstated the Hib booster dose they have been encouraging parents and health-care providers to “catch up” those children who missed the immunization.

Children born between June 2006 and March 2008 may not have received the Hib booster immunization because in December 2007, the CDC—prompted by limited supply of the vaccine—recommended that health-care professionals temporarily defer the booster dose of the Hib vaccine (which is usually given between the ages of 12 and 15 months). Children who didn't receive the Hib booster dose then, now have an opportunity to receive this vaccination to help protect against Hib disease.

Some parents may be unaware that without proper vaccinations, bacterial infections such as Hib can pose health threats to young children. Hib is a serious disease caused by the *Haemophilus influenzae* type b bacterium and usually strikes children less than five years old. Hib is a bacterial disease and if it spreads can cause serious problems including: meningitis (infection around the brain), pneumonia, severe swelling in the throat (making it hard to breathe), and infections of the blood, joints, or bones.

Prior to the availability of the Hib vaccine, Hib disease was the leading cause of bacterial meningitis among children in the United



States. Meningitis is an infection of the brain and spinal cord coverings, which can lead to lasting brain damage and deafness, and is just one of the invasive diseases that can be caused by Hib. Before the vaccine was available, approximately 20,000 children suffered from Hib disease each year and nearly 1,000 of those children under five years old died.

“Parents need to be sure that their child is protected by the Hib vaccine, including the final booster dose, against the serious diseases caused by *Haemophilus influenzae* type b,” stated Dr. Jerome Klein of Boston University School of Medicine.

Ask your health-care professional to check your child's immunization record and ensure that your child is up-to-date on all his or her immunizations and find out specifically if a final (or booster) dose in the Hib vaccination series is needed.

If your child has missed the booster dose, health-care experts agree, it's time to get them immunized as soon as possible. For more information, talk with your health-care professional and visit www.cdc.gov/Features/HibDisease/.



Editor's Note: Dr. Klein is a paid consultant of Sanofi Pasteur.