HAEMOPHILUS INFLUENZAE TYPE B (Hib) DISEASE
Reportable Disease (only invasive disease in age 14 or less)

*Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib) can cause a number of serious illnesses, but it is not related to influenza or "stomach flu". The number of infections in children has dropped due to use of the Hib vaccine.

**CAUSE**
*Haemophilus influenzae* type b, bacteria

**SYMPTOMS**
- Meningitis: unusual sleepiness, fever, stiff neck, vomiting, headache, irritability, lack of appetite.
- Cellulitis: a tender, rapid swelling of the skin, usually on the cheek or around the eye; may also have an ear infection on the same side and/or a low-grade fever.
- Epiglottitis: fever, trouble swallowing, tiredness, difficult and rapid breathing (often confused with viral croup, which is a milder infection and lasts longer.)
- Pneumonia: fever, cough, chest pains, difficulty breathing.
- Bacteremia: sudden onset of fever, chills, tiredness, irritability.
- Arthritis: swelling, redness, and loss of movement in the joints.

Children age 2 and under are most likely to develop these symptoms, although those up to age 5 are still at some risk. Invasive disease most commonly occurs in children who are too young to have completed their vaccination series.

**SPREAD**
When a person with Hib disease coughs or sneezes tiny droplets with *Haemophilus influenzae* type b bacteria into the air and another person breathes them in. A person can also get infected from touching these secretions and then touching their mouth, eyes, or nose.

**INCUBATION** (time from exposure to onset of symptoms)
Unknown; probably about 2-4 days

**CONTAGIOUS PERIOD**
Until 24 to 48 hours after effective treatment begins.

**EXCLUSION**
Child care and School: Until the child has been treated with antibiotics and is well enough to participate in routine activities.

**RISK FACTORS**
*Haemophilus influenzae*, including Hib, is a bacterium that can cause a severe infection, occurring mostly in infants and children younger than five years of age. Adults 65 years and older are also at higher risk. American Indian/Alaska Native populations are also at increased risk for invasive *Haemophilus influenzae* disease. People with certain medical conditions are at higher risk for developing a *Haemophilus influenzae* infection. Those medical conditions include:
- Sickle cell disease
- Asplenia (no spleen)
- HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) infection
- Antibody and complement deficiency syndromes
- Receipt of chemotherapy or radiation therapy for malignant neoplasms
- Receipt of hematopoietic stem cell transplant

**DIAGNOSIS**
Recommend parents/guardians call their healthcare provider immediately if their child develops fever or any other symptoms. There are lab tests to detect *Haemophilus*.

**TREATMENT**
Hib disease can be treated with antibiotics. Immediate treatment is necessary to prevent lasting damage or death.

**PREVENTION/CONTROL**
- **Vaccination is the most effective way to prevent Hib infection.** All infants should receive Hib vaccine as part of their routine vaccination schedule. See Section 3 for more details.
- Public health will make recommendations if exposed persons need to receive antibiotics and/or vaccine.
- Practice thorough and frequent handwashing (see Section 2)

For more information please contact Contra Costa Public Health at 925-313-6740 and visit our website at [http://cchealth.org/cd/](http://cchealth.org/cd/)

Additional information may be found at the following links:
[http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/hib/default.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/hib/default.htm)