

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON PENTAVALENT



## Frequently asked questions on Pentavalent

Two additional vaccines have been added to the DPT vaccine, namely Haemophilus Influenzae b and Hepatitis B. This means there will be a total of 5 vaccines in one injection which is called the PENTAVELENT vaccine. The five vaccines are: Diphtheria, tetanus, Pertussis, hepatitis B, and Haemophilus influenza type b. Pentavelent therefore protects children against five diseases; Diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, hepatitis b, and some types of pneumonia and meningitis. As a leader, health worker, journalist you need to understand and communicate to child care-takers the importance of this vaccine to the health of their children. This brochure will give you more information on the two vaccines that have been added.



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON Hib

(Haemophilus Influenzae type b)





### **What is Hib?**

Hib is an abbreviation for Haemophilus Influenzae type b, a germ that causes severe infections.

- Childhood meningitis (inflammation of the covering of the brain)
- Pneumonia – an infection of the lungs Epiglottitis – an infection of the throat.
- Septicaemia – an infection of the blood (also called blood poisoning)

### **What is Hib disease then?**

Haemophilus Influenzae type b (Hib) disease is any serious disease caused by the Hib germ.

### **What type of germ is Hib?**

Hib is a bacterium.

### **Does Hib cause 'flu'?**

No, Hib does not cause the "flu". "Flu" is caused by the Influenza virus, which is completely different.

### **Why is Hib disease a problem?**

Hib disease is a problem because:

- It often results in serious illness and or death.
- Hib meningitis is the commonest type of childhood meningitis.
- Children who survive Hib meningitis may develop permanent brain damage, hearing loss and mental retardation.
- It is the second most common cause of childhood pneumonia in Uganda.
- It affects infants.
- It is easily spread.



### **Who gets Hib disease?**

Hib disease is most common in children under five years of age. Children between 4 and 12 months are most at risk.

### **How is Hib disease spread?**

Hib germs normally establish themselves in the nose or upper throat:

- It is passed from child to child in droplets of moisture that come out of an infected child's mouth when he or she sneezes.
- Hib is also spread through shared toys and other things.

### **Can Hib be prevented?**

Yes, all Hib diseases can be prevented by Hib vaccine.

Hib vaccine however does not protect against disease caused by other germs e.g. a child can get meningitis or pneumonia from other germs.

### **Who should get Hib vaccine?**

All infants from 6 weeks of age should have Hib vaccine.

### **When should our children receive Hib vaccine?**

- at 6 weeks of age
- at 10 weeks of age
- at 14 weeks of age





### **Do older children need Hib vaccine?**

No, children over four or five years of age have usually developed a natural protection against diseases, so older children do not normally need Hib vaccine.

### **How is Hib vaccine given?**

Hib vaccine is given by injection in the thigh, it is safely given as one injection that also contains Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus(DPT) and Hepatitis B vaccines, so your child will continue to receive the same number of injections as before.

### **What shall I do if my child misses a dose or gets behind the schedule?**

Get the next doses as soon as you can. There is no need to start over.

### **How effective is this Hib vaccine?**

Hib vaccine has excellent protective efficacy of more than 95% in those receiving the complete 3 doses in infancy.

### **Are there children who should not get Hib vaccine?**

- Yes, the following categories of children should not receive Hib vaccine:
- children who have ever had a life threatening allergic reaction to a previous dose of Hib vaccine;
- children less than 6 weeks of age;
- children who are severely ill at the time the dose is scheduled should wait until they recover
- children over 5 years of age.

### **If a child is sick, can he receive Hib vaccine?**

Yes. You should immunize children who are sick for all vaccines required.

### **What are the side effects of Hib vaccine?**

Hib vaccine is safe. However a vaccine, like any medicine, is capable of causing serious allergic reactions in some people.

### **Are there any other serious problems associated with the Hib vaccine?**

No. However, Hib may cause mild problems like:

- Redness, warmth or swelling where the injection was given.
- Less commonly a fever over 38°C that lasts a short time after the immunization may occur.

### **What should I do if my child develops any reaction?**

Take your child to the nearest health facility and see a health worker.

### **How is this vaccine procured?**

Hib vaccine in Somalia is procured by the Ministry of Health with assistance from UNICEF, the World Health Organisation and financial support from the GAVI Alliance. WHO has checked and approved the quality of the vaccine.

### **If a child has already received 3 doses of DPT, should I give him DPT-HepB-Hib?**

No. Do not give DPT-HepB-Hib to children who have completed the DPT schedule.

### **If a child has already had one or two doses of DPT, do I still give him 3 doses of DPT-HepB-Hib?**

No. If a child has had one dose of DPT, give him 2 doses of DPT- HepB-Hib according to schedule. If he has already had 2 doses of DPT, give him DPT-HepB-Hib only one time according to schedule.

### **What is Hepatitis B?**





# **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON HEPATITIS B**





Hepatitis B is a serious disease of the liver that is caused by the Hepatitis B virus (HBV) which usually exists in the blood and body fluids of the infected (or HBV+) person. HBV can also cause chronic infection, that leads to liver damage (cirrhosis), liver cancer, and death.

### **Who gets Hepatitis?**

In much of the developing world, most people become infected with HBV during childhood, and 8% to 10% of people in the general population become chronically infected.

### **How do people get infected?**

HBV is transmitted by contact with blood or body fluids of the infected person in the same way as HIV virus that causes AIDS. HBV is 40–100 times more infectious than HIV. The main ways of getting HBV are:

- Perinatal (from mother to baby at the birth);
- Child-to-child transmission;
- Unsafe injections and transfusions
- Sexual contact.

### **What is the treatment for Hepatitis B?**

There is no known cure for Hepatitis B. Thus, prevention is the best option in dealing with this disease.

### **Can chronic Hepatitis B and liver cancer be treated?**

Liver cancer is almost always fatal, and usually develops between 35 and 65 years of age. Chronic Hepatitis B in some patients is treated with a drug called interferon or lamivudine, which can help some patients. However, this drug costs a lot of money and is not affordable to most Somalis. Liver cirrhosis has no cure. The best option is to vaccinate.

### **How is the vaccine used to prevent Hepatitis B?**

Hepatitis B vaccine prevents both HBV infection and those diseases related to HBV infection. More than 95% of children develop adequate antibody to the recommended series of three doses.

### **For whom is Hepatitis B vaccine recommended?**

DPT-HepB-Hib is recommended for all infants, and children up to 2 years who have not completed all 3 DPT immunisations. However, it is recommended that the following people be vaccinated against HBV (without DPT):

- Sexually active heterosexual adults with more than one sex partner.
- Persons at occupational risk of infection, e.g. health workers
- Hemodialysis patients –in kidney failure where the body excreta are removed through a specialised fluid.
- Contact with persons with chronic HBV infection.

### **How safe and effective is the vaccine?**

Hepatitis B vaccine has an outstanding record of safety and effectiveness. The vaccine is 95%



### **What are possible side effects?**

Serious side effects reported after receiving Hepatitis B vaccine are very uncommon. Although reported, there is no confirmed scientific evidence that Hepatitis B vaccine causes chronic illnesses like multiple sclerosis, chronic fatigue syndrome, rheumatoid arthritis, or autoimmune disorders. There is no risk of HBV infection from the vaccine.

### **Is it safe to mix DPT-HepB vaccine with Hib vaccine and give it in one injection?**

Yes. It is safe, and it is the best way to administer DPT-HepB-Hib because the child only receives one injection instead of two. World Health Organisation recommends giving these vaccines in combined injections.

### **Will this new vaccine be monitored?**

Yes, Ministry of Health together with UNICEF and WHO will monitor any adverse events following immunisation (AEFI).

### **Where can I find more information about this vaccine?**

You can find more information by contacting Ministry of Health, WHO and UNICEF

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ON HIB AND HEPATITIS B

