

**What is *Haemophilus influenzae* non-type B?**

Haemophilus influenzae (*H. influenzae*) non-type B is a bacterium that can cause pink eye, ear infection, sinus infection and pneumonia. In rare cases, it can cause meningitis (inflammation around the spinal cord and brain), bloodstream infections, infection of the amniotic membranes that surround a fetus, and bloodstream infections in newborns. *H. influenzae* non-type B is not the same as influenza or the flu.

Who is at risk for *H. influenzae* non-type B?

H. influenzae non-type B is found in the nose and throat of healthy children and adults. Most people do not get sick from carrying this bacterium in their bodies. Those who do get sick are primarily adults and the elderly who have an underlying medical condition.

What are the symptoms of *H. influenzae* non-type B?

Symptoms depend upon the part of the body affected. Pneumonia may cause a cough that produces mucus and rapid breathing. With pink eye, the eye will be pink or red, painful and itchy and have more than a tiny amount of yellow or green discharge. Infected eyes may be crusted shut in the morning. An ear infection may cause pain in the ear, especially when swallowing or lying down. Sinus infections may cause pain and pressure in the sinuses, cold symptoms, and many other symptoms.

How soon do symptoms appear?

The incubation period for *H. influenzae* non-type B disease is unknown.

How is *H. influenzae* non-type B spread?

H. influenzae non-type B infection may be transmitted through contact with secretions or droplets from the nose and throat of an infected person.

When and for how long is a person able to spread *H. influenzae* non-type B?

A person can spread *H. influenzae* non-type B as long as the bacterium is present. If treated with antibiotics, a person will be able to spread the bacteria for 24 to 48 hours after they begin taking the medicine.

How is a person diagnosed?

Consult a health-care professional for a positive diagnosis. A laboratory test may be needed in order to make a diagnosis.

What is the treatment?

Antibiotics are used to treat people with serious *H. influenzae* non-type B infections. No treatment is needed for carriers, or people who have *H. influenzae* non-type B in their bodies but who don't become sick.

Does past infection make a person immune?

No.

Should children or others be excluded from day care, school, work or other activities if they have *H. influenzae* non-type B?

Whether a child is able to attend day care, school, work or other activities depends on where the infection is. For example:

Pink eye:

- Children should be excluded if they have bacterial pink eye (i.e., yellow or green discharge and redness of the eye). Children who have bacterial pink eye should be excluded until antibiotic eye drops or ointment is started.

Ear infection, sinus infection, and pneumonia:

- A child does not need to be excluded if he or she has an ear infection, sinus infection, or pneumonia, unless the child is unable to participate and the staff believes they cannot care for the child without compromising the ability to care for other children.

What can be done to prevent the spread of *H. influenzae* non-type B?

Because *H. influenzae* non-type B is normally found in the nose and throat of healthy children and adults there is usually no need to prevent the spread of *H. influenzae* non-type B. However, when it is the cause of pink eye precautions can be taken. These include appropriate hand washing before and after touching the eyes, mouth and nose. It is also very important to carefully sanitize objects that are commonly touched by faces or hands, such as doorknobs, tables, telephones, toys and blankets.

There is no vaccine for *H. influenzae* non-type B.

Additional Information:

Additional information is available at www.ndhealth.gov/disease or by calling the North Dakota Department of Health at 800.472.2180.

This disease is a reportable condition. As mandated by North Dakota law, any incidence of this disease shall be reported to the North Dakota Department of Health.

Resource: American Academy of Pediatrics. *Haemophilus influenzae* Infections. In: Pickering LK, ed. *Red Book: 2006 Report of the Committee on Infectious Diseases*. 26th ed. Elk Grove Village, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics; 2006: 310-318

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