



February 10, 2009

Dear Provider:

We want to stress to you the importance for all children in your practice to receive the 3 dose primary series with available Hib-containing vaccine. Please review these important points:

- The current supply of Hib-containing vaccine has led to lower completion of the primary series. In addition, recommended temporary deferral of the booster dose at 12-15 months for non-high risk children may have resulted in higher Hib carriage in non-symptomatic children, increased cases, and at least one death.
- For these reasons, it is even more important that all infants receive the complete primary series. With currently available vaccine products (manufactured by sanofi), this means that infants need 3 doses of the available Hib-containing vaccine at 2, 4, and 6 months.
- There is enough Hib-containing vaccine to ensure that all children receive the complete 3 dose series.
- If Pentacel (DTaP-Hib-IPV) is the only Hib-containing vaccine available, this combination product should be used to complete the primary series, even if it results in receipt of additional doses of other antigens (e.g., DTaP, IPV).
- The Hib-containing vaccine products that are available may not be what you are used to using in your practice; however, the potential increased bacterial carriage in any area makes it more important than ever that children are adequately protected.

The following non-high risk children should be scheduled to receive the primary series of Hib vaccine as outlined below:

- If the child is at least 6 weeks but less than 12 months of age and has received zero, one, or two Hib doses, schedule him/her for the first or next dose(s) immediately with a minimum of four weeks between the doses. These children will need one booster dose when the Hib vaccine shortage is over.
- If the child is between 12 and 14 months of age and has not had any doses of Hib vaccine, schedule appointments for two doses, eight weeks apart.

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- If the child is between 12 and 14 months old and has received Hib vaccine but did not complete the primary series before they turned 1 year old (i.e. had 1 dose of the Merck product OR 1-2 doses of the sanofi product), schedule an appointment for 1 additional dose, a minimum of eight weeks from the last dose.
- If the child is 5 years old or older and hasn't received any Hib vaccine, Hib vaccine is not necessary.

All children at increased risk of Hib diseases should continue to receive the full series of Hib vaccine (including the booster dose) for whichever product they receive, including children with asplenia, sickle cell disease, human immunodeficiency virus infection and certain other immunodeficiency syndromes, and malignant neoplasms, as well as children who are American Indian/Alaska Native.

If you have any questions, please contact the CDC at 1-800-232-4636/1-800-CDC-INFO or by email using the form at: http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/about/contact/nipinfo_contact_form.htm .