

Vaccine Alphabet Soup

Is It a Hib or Hepatitis B Vaccine Dose?

The variety of acronyms for vaccines that can appear on children's immunization record cards can cause problems in interpretation, especially for school and child care facility staff who review immunization records of entrants. Fortunately, this problem appears to be diminishing as more and more providers use the acronyms that appear in the ACIP/AAP/AAFP's annual "Recommended Childhood Immunization Schedule" chart. However, it is not gone – particularly for Hib and hepatitis B vaccines since acronyms for both typically include the letters "H" and "B:"

For *Haemophilus influenzae* type b vaccine, the preferred acronym is "Hib." Some of the other confusing acronyms used are "HbOC" and "HbCV."

For hepatitis B vaccine, the preferred acronym is "HepB." Some of the other confusing acronyms used are "HBV" and "HBVac."

Adding to the confusion for schools and child care centers is that some children's immunization cards mention receipt of "HBIG." This is the acronym for hepatitis B immune globulin, a product which confers temporary protection to persons just exposed to hepatitis B infection. However, HBIG is not a vaccine, does not give long-term protection, and does not satisfy the school and child care facility entry hepatitis B immunization requirement.

We hope use of alternative, confusing acronyms for vaccines will continue to diminish. In the interim, however, school and child care facility staff who review children's immunization records need to be aware of the acronyms listed above.

On the following three pages, we have listed the names of vaccines and other biologics used in foreign countries, as well as those used in the U.S.