**Haemophilus influenzae Invasive Disease**

Merlin disease code: 03841  
Case report form (CRF): **Active Bacterial Core Surveillance CRF**  
MERLIN EXTENDED DATA REQUIRED (for cases <5 years old)

### Clinical criteria for case classification
Invasive disease may manifest as pneumonia, bacteremia, meningitis, epiglottitis, septic arthritis, cellulitis, or purulent pericarditis; less common infections include endocarditis and osteomyelitis.

### Laboratory criteria for case classification

**Confirmatory:**
Either of the following:
- Isolation of *H. influenzae* from a normally sterile body site (e.g., cerebrospinal fluid [CSF], blood, joint fluid, pleural fluid, pericardial fluid) or
- Detection of *H. influenzae*-specific nucleic acid in a specimen obtained from a normally sterile body site (e.g., blood or CSF), using polymerase chain reaction (PCR).

**Presumptive:**
Detection of *H. influenzae* type b antigen in CSF.

### Epidemiological criteria for case classification
Not applicable.

### Case classification

**Confirmed:**
A person with confirmatory laboratory evidence.

**Probable:**
Meningitis in a person with presumptive laboratory evidence.

### Criteria to distinguish a new case from previous reports
Not applicable.

### Comments
*H. influenza* invasive disease cases in people ≥5 years old are only reportable for laboratories participating in electronic laboratory reporting (ELR). Cases in people ≥5 years old will be automatically created and reported in Merlin based on ELR results, and will not require symptoms to meet the case definition. For case reports in people ≥5 years old received from health care providers or via paper laboratory results, cases do not need to be investigated or created in Merlin; however, county health departments can choose to enter and report these cases.

Cases in children <5 years old are reportable for all laboratories and health care providers. All cases in children <5 years old need to be investigated and reported, regardless of the method through which the case reports were received. **Extended data in Merlin is only required for those cases in people <5 years old.**

Positive antigen test results from urine or serum specimens are unreliable for diagnosis of *H. influenzae* disease and should not be used as a basis for case classification.
Serotype should be determined for all *H. influenzae* isolates because Hib vaccines protect against serotype b organisms only. This testing is especially important for children <5 years of age to determine possible vaccine failure or failure to vaccinate. Positive antigen test results from urine or serum specimens are unreliable for diagnosis of *H. influenzae* disease. Sputum cultures are not confirmatory as sputum is not obtained from a sterile site.

✉️ **Isolates or specimens from cases in people <5 years old must be sent to the Bureau of Public Health Laboratories for typing to determine if they are type b.**

✉️

*Return to Table of Contents*