7-month-old infant infected with H. influenzae type b meningitis: permanently deaf with seizure disorder

Two parents opted not to vaccinate their 7-month-old infant with the recommended childhood vaccines. The family then took a six-week trip to visit relatives in the Middle East, traveling through urban areas and rural areas. Upon the family's return, the child began to exhibit symptoms including fever, vomiting, and lethargy. These symptoms worsened over the next few days, at which time the mother consulted the baby's pediatrician who immediately referred them to the hospital.

The infant was diagnosed with H. influenzae type b meningitis, a bacterial infection of the membranes covering the brain and spinal cord. This infection can be deadly if not treated very quickly; this infection is also vaccine-preventable. The Hib vaccine is recommended by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) for all children under 5 years of age, with the first dose administered at two months of age. In this case, the child did not receive the vaccine and, as a result, contracted an infection rarely seen in the United States. As a result of this vaccine-preventable illness, the child is now permanently deaf and has a seizure disorder.

Toddler with heart transplant falls ill with severe and life-threatening Streptococcus pneumoniae sepsis

A toddler received a heart transplant because he had hypoplastic left heart syndrome with heterotaxy, a congenital heart defect that severely affects normal blood flow through the heart. This also left the child without a spleen, compromising immunity. In addition, the child was prescribed immune-suppressant medication in preparation for and after the heart transplant procedure. Against medical advice, the child's parents declined all CDC recommended vaccinations.

When the child was 5 years old, he became severely ill and was brought to the hospital and diagnosed with Streptococcus pneumoniae sepsis, a severe and life-threatening infection. CDC recommends vaccination against Streptococcus pneumoniae for all children by their second birthday, with the first dose administered at two months of age. The child was placed in intensive care to receive dialysis due to kidney failure, intubation to allow him to breathe, and medications to maintain blood pressure and circulation.

Have a story to share? Contact Colin McGoodwin at cmcgoodwin@idsociety.org