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HIB vaccine from April 1

NEW DELHI: THE Union Health Ministry is planning to introduce a vaccine to protect children against Haemophilus Influenza type B (HIB), the bacteria which causes illnesses like meningitis, pneumonia and septic arthritis, as part of the national immunisation programme from April 1. "While, the tenders for procuring the vaccine will be floated shortly, the plan is to introduce the vaccine from April 1," said Naresh Dayal, Secretary, Health. In a first for India, the vaccine will be introduced in the form of pentavalent vaccine, which means a single shot will have antigens of four other diseases. *ENS*