

Polio

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What is polio?

Polio is a disease caused by a virus. It can cause lifelong paralysis (can't move parts of the body), and it can be deadly. But, the polio vaccine can protect against polio virus.

What are the symptoms of polio?

Most people who get polio do not have any symptoms.

A small number of people (4 to 8 people out of 100) have minor symptoms that may include the following:

- Fever
- Tiredness
- Headache
- Nausea and vomiting
- Sore throat
- Stiff neck and back
- Pain in arms and legs

These symptoms usually last 2 to 10 days and then go away on their own.

How serious is polio?

Even though most people have no symptoms or minor symptoms, the risk of lifelong paralysis is very serious. Even children who often seem to recover fully can develop new muscle pain, weakness, or paralysis as adults, 30 or 40 years later.

About 2 to 5 children out of 100 who have paralysis from polio die because the virus affects the muscles that help them breathe.

About 1 out of 100 people who get polio have weakness or paralysis in their arms, legs, or both. This paralysis or weakness can last a lifetime.

How does polio spread?

Polio spreads easily, usually from the stool (feces) of an infected person to the mouth of someone else through hands or objects, like toys, that have small amounts of the stool on them. It can also spread from the mouth of an infected person, as through kissing.

Benefits of the polio vaccine (IPV)

- Saves lives.
- Protects young children from serious disease and lifelong disability.

Side effects of the polio vaccine (IPV)

- The most common side effects are usually mild and include redness and pain from the shot.

What is the polio vaccine or IPV?

IPV is a type of polio vaccine. IPV stands for inactivated (killed) polio vaccine. It is given by a shot.

The polio vaccine protects children by preparing their bodies to fight the polio virus. Almost all children (99 children out of 100) who get all doses of IPV will be protected from the polio virus.

Why should my child get the polio vaccine?

The polio vaccine prevents polio. Even though no polio cases have originated in the U.S. in 20 years, the disease still occurs in some parts of the world. It would only take one traveler with polio from another country to bring polio back to the U.S.

When should my child get the polio vaccine?

Children should get four doses of IPV at the following ages for best protection:

- One dose each at 2 months and 4 months;
- A third dose at 6 through 18 months; and
- A fourth (booster) dose at 4 through 6 years of age.

It is safe to get IPV at the same time as other vaccines.



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Is the polio vaccine safe?

IPV is very safe, and it is effective at preventing polio disease. Vaccines, like any medicine, can have side effects. But severe side effects from IPV are very rare.

If my child does not get the polio vaccine, will he get polio?

Without the vaccine, polio spreads very easily. Before the polio vaccine, there were more than 20,000 cases of polio in the U.S. each year. Today, thanks to the vaccine, there are no cases of polio in the U.S. But if people stopped vaccinating, we could see cases of polio again.

How can I learn more about the polio vaccine?

To learn more about the polio vaccine or other vaccines, talk to your child's doctor.

Call **800-CDC-INFO** (800-232-4636) or go to <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines> and check out the following resources:

- Vaccines and Preventable Diseases—Polio Vaccination: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/polio/default.htm>
- Common Questions Parents Ask about Infant Immunizations: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/spec-grps/infants/parent-questions.htm>
- Vaccines website for parents: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents>

What can I do to protect my child from polio?

- ✓ Vaccinate your child on time.
- ✓ Talk with your child's doctor if you have questions.
- ✓ Keep a record of your child's vaccinations to make sure your child is up-to-date.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, American Academy of Family Physicians, and American Academy of Pediatrics strongly recommend all children receive the polio vaccine according to the recommended schedule.