

Polio Disease

Description

Poliomyelitis (polio) is a highly infectious disease caused by a virus that invades the nervous system.

Symptoms

Up to 95% of persons infected with polio will have no symptoms. About four to eight percent of infected persons have minor symptoms such as fever, fatigue, nausea, headache, flu-like symptoms, stiffness in the neck and back, and pain in the limbs which often resolves completely. Fewer than one percent of polio cases result in permanent paralysis of the limbs (usually the legs). Of those paralyzed, 5-10% die when the paralysis strikes the respiratory muscles.

Complications

Paralysis that can lead to permanent disability and death

Transmission

Contact with an infected person

Vaccine

There are two types of vaccine that can prevent polio: inactivated polio vaccine (IPV) and oral polio vaccine (OPV). IPV has been used in the United States since 2000; however OPV is still used throughout much of the world.

Who Needs It?

Childhood Immunization Schedule

Children should be vaccinated with 4 doses of inactivated polio vaccine (IPV) at the following ages:

- * A dose at 2 months
- * A dose at 4 months
- * A dose at 6-18 months
- * A booster dose at 4-6 years

Adult Immunization Schedule

Adults should be vaccinated in the following situations:

- * You are traveling to polio-endemic or high-risk areas of the world. Ask your health care provider for specific information on whether you need to be vaccinated.
- * You are working in a laboratory and handling specimens that might contain polioviruses.
- * You are a health care worker or have close contact with a person who could be infected with poliovirus.