



Most people in the United States (U.S.) are protected against polio. However, the disease still occurs in other parts of the world. People who haven't received all four doses of the vaccine are at risk. Make sure your child is up to date on their vaccines.

More Questions?

Connect with a County of San Diego Public Health Nurse for more information:



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Scan here to learn more about polio vaccination on the sdiz.org website.

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Polio Poliomyelitis

Everything You Need to Know
About Preventing Polio.



What is Polio?

Polio, or poliomyelitis, is an infectious disease caused by the poliovirus. It can cause lifelong paralysis (loss of movement) in the arms or legs. In severe cases, it can lead to death. In the U.S., polio is very rare, but it still exists in other parts of the world. If polio germs exist anywhere, they can spread when people travel.

Transmission

Polio spreads easily from person to person. The virus enters the body through the mouth and spreads to others via saliva (spit) or feces (poop). People can come into contact with the virus when:

- They have direct contact, or touch an object contaminated with the poop of an infected person.
 - This can happen if someone does not wash their hands well with soap and water after going to the bathroom.
 - Objects, such as toys, can also be covered in poop particles.
- An infected person coughs or sneezes on them.
- They eat food or drink liquids contaminated with the virus.

Symptoms

- Most people who get infected with polio have no symptoms.
- Some people may have mild flu-like symptoms.



Complications

Some people may develop more serious symptoms, such as:

- Meningitis (an infection of the covering of the spinal cord and/or brain).
- Paralysis (cannot move arms or legs).

In severe cases, it can affect parts of the body that help with breathing. This can lead to death.

Polio does not go away after a person gets better. Post-polio syndrome (PPS) can cause pain in muscles and joints. It can also cause paralysis, making it difficult to move your body parts.

Vaccination is the Best Prevention

The best way to prevent polio is through the polio vaccine. It is also important to practice good hand hygiene and wash hands often with soap and water.

In the U.S., children get one (1) dose of the Inactivated Poliovirus Vaccine (IPV) when they are:

- 2 months,
- 4 months,
- 6-18 months, and
- 4-6 years old.

Children are protected from polio after receiving four (4) doses of IPV. If you or your child received the polio vaccine in another country, check with your doctor if you need the U.S. (IPV) vaccine.

