

Polio Vaccine (IPV)

Get protected, get immunized.

- Vaccines make your immune system stronger. They build antibodies to help prevent diseases.
- Immunization is safe. It is much safer to get immunized than to get these diseases.

What is the polio vaccine?

The polio vaccine protects against the polio virus. The polio vaccine you get by an injection (needle) is called IPV.

What is polio?

Polio is an infection of the nervous system (brain, spinal cord, and nerves) caused by a virus. Most people infected with polio do not have symptoms, but they can still spread the disease. Some people have mild flu-like symptoms. In rare cases, polio can lead to paralysis (not being able to move all or part of your body) and death.

Who is most at risk?

Those most at risk of polio are:

- Children who have not had a polio vaccine (polio vaccine is typically given to children combined with other vaccines).
- Travellers going to areas that have a high risk of polio.
- People who live in areas where there is a high risk of polio or an outbreak of polio.
- People who work at a wastewater treatment plant and are exposed to sewage.
- Anyone who has close contact with people from areas where there is high risk of polio.
- Anyone who has close contact with babies from other countries who may have been immunized with oral polio vaccine in the last 6 weeks.

How does it spread?

Polio spreads through stool (poop) infected with the polio virus. The infected stool can get onto your hands or into your food and water, and then into your mouth.

Who should get the polio vaccine?

You can get this vaccine if you have not had all your polio vaccine doses. Polio vaccine may be given combined with other vaccines like DTaP-IPV-Hib-HB, DTaP-IPV-Hib, or dTap-IPV. The vaccine you get depends on your age and other vaccines you need. You can get IPV if you have had all your doses of the other vaccines and only need polio vaccine.

Oral polio vaccine (OPV) is given by mouth. It used to be given in Canada and is still used in other countries. If you got OPV after April 1, 2016, you may not be fully protected against all types of polio, and you need IPV to be fully protected.

Some people are at higher risk of contact with polio, such as:

- You are part of a community or group where polio is spreading.
- You have close contact with people from areas where there is high risk of polio (for example, you work with refugees from a country where polio is spreading).
- You have close contact with babies from other countries who may have been immunized with oral polio vaccine in the last 6 weeks.
- You work at a wastewater treatment plant and are exposed to sewage.
- You are a healthcare worker or health care student and may have contact with someone who can spread polio.
- You work in a lab and may handle the polio virus.

You may also need polio vaccine if you are travelling to a country with a high risk of polio. If you need polio vaccine for travel, it is not free for adults. For children who are travelling, contact your local public health or community health centre for more information.

How many doses do I need?

You get at least 3 doses of a polio vaccine the first time you are immunized for polio. This is called the primary series. You usually get this series as a baby in vaccines that protect against other diseases.

After the primary series, children need an extra (booster) dose at age 4 years.

Adults who are at high risk for polio may need a booster dose. You must wait 10 years after getting your primary series for polio before getting this booster.

Are there other vaccines that protect against polio?

The vaccines dTap-IPV, DTaP-IPV-Hib, and DTaP-IPV-Hib-HB all protect against polio.

- **dTap-IPV** protects against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough), and polio. As part of the routine immunization schedule, children get this vaccine as an extra (booster) dose if they are age 4 years and have already had their first 4 doses of a diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, and polio vaccine.
- **DTaP-IPV-Hib** protects against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio, and *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib). As part of the routine immunization schedule, this vaccine is given to children born before March 1, 2018, who are under age 7 years as part of their primary series and to all children age 18 months as a booster dose.
- **DTaP-IPV-Hib-HB** protects against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio, Hib, and hepatitis B. As part of the routine immunization schedule, babies get this vaccine starting at age 2 months.

The type of polio vaccine you get depends on your age and if you need protection from other diseases.

How well does the vaccine work?

After the primary series, the protection for polio is over 95%. After a booster dose, the protection is almost 100%.

Where can I get the polio vaccine?

If you can get this vaccine for free, contact your local public health or community health centre.

If you want the vaccine and need to pay for it, contact a travel health clinic or talk to a doctor or pharmacist.

Are there side effects from the polio vaccine?

There can be side effects from the polio vaccine, but they tend to be mild and go away in a few days. Side effects may include:

- redness or feeling sore where you had the needle
- a fever

At least 1 out of 100 people who got this vaccine reported 1 or more of these side effects. In some cases, it is unknown if the vaccine caused these side effects.

It is important to stay at the clinic for 15 minutes after your vaccine. Some people may have a rare but serious allergic reaction called anaphylaxis. If anaphylaxis happens, you will get medicine to treat the symptoms.

It is rare to have a serious side effect after a vaccine. Call Health Link at 811 to report any serious or unusual side effects.

How can I manage side effects?

- To help with soreness and swelling, put a cool, wet cloth over the area where you had the needle.
- There is medicine to help with a fever or pain. Check with your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure what medicine or dose to take. Follow the directions on the package.
- Some people with health problems, such as a weak immune system, must call their doctor if they get a fever. If you have been told to do this, call your doctor even if you think the fever is from the vaccine.

Who should not get the polio vaccine?

You may not be able to get this vaccine if:

- You have an allergy to any part of the vaccine.
- You had a severe (serious) or unusual side effect after this vaccine or one like it.

If you have allergies or have had a side effect from this vaccine, check with your doctor or a public health nurse before you get the vaccine.

Although you can get the vaccine if you have a mild illness such as a cold or fever, you should stay home until you are feeling better to prevent spreading your illness to others.

I have a fear of needles. How can I prepare for my immunization?

Many adults and children are afraid of needles. You can do many things before, during, and after immunization to be more comfortable.



Scan the QR code, visit ahs.ca/vaccinecomfort, or call Health Link at 811 for information.

For more information about immunization



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Scan the QR code or go to ahs.ca/immunize