



## POLIO (Poliomyelitis) ?

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Polio is an infectious disease caused by a virus which invades the nervous system & may cause irreversible paralysis. It can strike at any age but mainly affects children under 5. There is no cure - it can only be prevented. Polio vaccine, given multiple times, can protect a child for life.

Polio (*poliomyelitis*) is a serious disease caused by infection with one of 3 types of polio-virus. Polio-virus is spread between people through contact with infected feces & throat secretions such as saliva. Once the virus enters the body through the mouth, it multiplies in the throat & small intestine. The virus can be found in the blood, throat & feces within 3-5 days of infection. An infected person is most infectious from 7 to 10 days before to 7 to 10 days after symptoms appear. The virus can however be spread for several weeks after infection, even if a person has no symptoms.

Symptoms of polio can vary from mild, flu-like symptoms to severe paralysis in the arms, legs or diaphragm (*which controls breathing*). Many people infected with polio-virus have no symptoms. If symptoms do occur, they may include headache, nausea & vomiting, generally feeling unwell (*malaise*) & stiffness of the neck & back, with or without paralysis.

There is no cure for polio. The aim of treatment is to help patients manage the effects of the disease & may include physiotherapy & portable ventilators to help breathing. People are most at risk of infection with the polio-virus if they have not been immunized against polio. Pregnant women, the elderly, the very young & people with immune system problems are especially at risk of infection.



Vaccination is mandatory & supplied FREE by the 'Shire'!!!

## PREVENTION!

There are 2 types of vaccination methods, needle & oral. Inactivated polio vaccine (*IPV*) is given by injection, it replaced the oral vaccine (*OPV*) which is unsafe, can cause vaccine-associated paralysis. Polio vaccine combined with vaccines for other diseases is best, such as diphtheria, tetanus & whooping cough.

Adults who have not been immunized can also be vaccinated against polio. It is important for children to complete a recommended course of vaccinations to help protect them against infection. For babies and children, a course of 4

injections is required for long-lasting immunity.

**Recommended combined 'IPV' vaccinations:**

**2, 4 & 6 months** (*diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, hepatitis B, polio vaccine*)

**4 years of age** (*diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough & polio vaccine*)

It is important to stay at the clinic for 15 minutes after the immunization (*allergic reaction check*).

A range of side effects (*Muscle aches, Mild temperature, Soreness, redness & swelling at the injection site, Sleepiness*) may be experienced following vaccination. These are usually not serious. **Reducing side effects:** *hold a cold, wet cloth against injection site, drink extra fluids, avoid overheating.*