

Inactivated Polio Vaccine (IPV)

What is polio?

Polio is a highly infectious disease caused by a virus. It invades the nervous system and can cause total paralysis in a matter of hours.

You get it from drinking water or eating food with the polio germ in it. It is also spread from person to person. Polio mainly affects children under five years of age.

Initial symptoms are fever, fatigue, headache, vomiting, stiffness in the neck and pain in the limbs. One in 200 infections leads to irreversible paralysis (usually in the legs). Among those paralysed, 5–10% die when their breathing muscles become immobilized.

Who should get the vaccine?

Polio vaccine is included in the combination vaccines routinely given to infants and children.

This vaccine is not routinely given to adults. Only adults who are likely to come in contact with the polio germ need to receive the polio vaccine. These adults include:

- people who travel to other countries where polio is common
- laboratory workers who handle specimens that may contain the polio germ
- health care workers who look after patients who may have the polio germ

IPV Vaccine

IPV can be given alone or in combination with other vaccines. Your health care provider will help you decide which vaccines you need.

Inactivated Polio Vaccine (IPV) protects 99 percent of people who get all their needles.

Who should NOT get IPV?

- anyone with a high fever or serious infection worse than a cold
- anyone with a severe allergy to any part of the vaccine including, antibiotics called neomycin or polymyxin B
- a serious allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) to this vaccine

Side effects

Most reactions are mild and last for only few days after getting the needle. Some people get mild pain, swelling and redness at the spot where the needle was given.

When should I seek medical attention?

If you develop hives, swelling of the face or mouth, trouble breathing, serious drowsiness or other serious problems.

Your record of protection

After any immunization, ensure your personal immunization record or "yellow card" is updated. Keep it in a safe place.

Questions?

Talk to your health care provider or contact Public Health at 519-575-4400.

Accessible formats of this document are available upon request.

Region of Waterloo Public Health
Infectious Diseases, Dental and Sexual Health