

Vaccine Information Statement

Polio Vaccine: What you need to know

Many Vaccine Information Statements are available in Spanish and other languages. See www.immunize.org/vis
Hojas de Información Sobre Vacunas están disponibles en Español y en muchos otros idiomas. Visite <http://www.immunize.org/vis>

1. Why get vaccinated?

Vaccination can protect people from **polio**. Polio is a disease caused by a virus.

Most people infected with polio have no symptoms. But sometimes people who get polio will develop paralysis (cannot move their arms or legs). Polio can result in permanent disability. Polio can also cause death, usually by paralyzing the muscles used for breathing.

Polio used to be very common in the United States. It paralyzed and killed thousands of people every year before polio vaccine was introduced in 1955.

Polio has been eliminated from the United States. But it can still occur in some parts of the world. It would only take one person infected with polio coming from another country to bring the disease back here if we were not protected by vaccine. If the effort to eliminate the disease from the world is successful, some day we won't need polio vaccine. Until then, we need to keep getting our children vaccinated.

2. Polio vaccine

Inactivated Polio Vaccine (**IPV**) can prevent polio.

Children

Most people should get IPV when they are children. 4 doses of IPV are usually given at 2, 4, 6 to 18 months, and 4 to 6 years of age.

A different vaccination schedule might be recommended for children traveling to areas where wild poliovirus has been reported in the last 12 months. Your health care provider can give you more information.

Adults

Most adults do not need IPV because they were already vaccinated as children. But some adults are at higher risk and should consider polio vaccination, including:

- people traveling to certain parts of the world,
- laboratory workers who might handle polio virus, and
- health care workers treating patients who could have polio.

These higher-risk adults could get anywhere from 1 to 3 doses of IPV, depending on how many doses they have had in the past.

IPV is given as an injection in the leg or arm, depending on age. It may be given at the same time as other vaccines.

3. Some people should not get this vaccine

Anyone who has ever had a life-threatening allergic reaction to a dose of this vaccine should not get another dose of IPV.

Anyone with a severe allergy to any component of this vaccine, including the antibiotics neomycin, streptomycin or polymyxin B, should not get IPV. *Tell your immunization provider if the person being vaccinated has any severe allergies.*

If the person scheduled for vaccination is not feeling well, your health care provider might decide to reschedule the shot on another day.

4. Risks of a vaccine reaction

With any medicine, including vaccines, there is a chance of reactions.

Some people who get IPV get a sore spot where the shot was given. IPV has not been known to cause serious problems, and most people don't have any problems at all with it.

Problems that could happen after any injected vaccine:

- People sometimes faint after a medical procedure, including vaccination. Sitting or lying down for about 15 minutes can help prevent fainting, and injuries caused by a fall. Tell your doctor if you feel dizzy, or have vision changes or ringing in the ears.
- Some older children and adults get severe pain in the shoulder and have difficulty moving the arm where a shot was given. This happens very rarely.
- Any medication can cause a severe allergic reaction. Such reactions from a vaccine are very rare, estimated at about 1 in a million doses, and would happen within a few minutes to a few hours after the vaccination.

As with any medicine, there is a very small chance of a vaccine causing a serious injury or death.

The safety of vaccines is always being monitored. For more information, visit:

www.cdc.gov/vaccinesafety/

5. What if there is a serious reaction?

What should I look for?

- Look for anything that concerns you, such as signs of a severe allergic reaction, very high fever, or unusual behavior.

Signs of a severe allergic reaction can include hives, swelling of the face and throat, difficulty breathing, a fast heartbeat, dizziness, and weakness – usually within a few minutes to a few hours after the vaccination.

What should I do?

- If you think it is a severe allergic reaction or other emergency that can't wait, call 9-1-1 or get the person to the nearest hospital. Otherwise, call your doctor.

Reactions should be reported to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS). Your doctor should file this report, or you can do it yourself through the VAERS web site at www.vaers.hhs.gov, or by calling **1-800-822-7967**.

VAERS does not give medical advice.

6. The National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program

The National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program (VICP) is a federal program that was created to compensate people who may have been injured by certain vaccines.

Persons who believe they may have been injured by a vaccine can learn about the program and about filing a claim by calling **1-800-338-2382** or visiting the VICP website at www.hrsa.gov/vaccinecompensation. There is a time limit to file a claim for compensation.

7. How can I learn more?

- Ask your healthcare provider. He or she can give you the vaccine package insert or suggest other sources of information.
- Call your local or state health department.
- Contact the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):
 - Call **1-800-232-4636 (1-800-CDC-INFO)** or
 - Visit CDC's website at www.cdc.gov/vaccines

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