

Polio Vaccine (IPV)

Immunization has saved more lives in Canada in the last 50 years than any other health measure.

What is polio vaccine (IPV)?

The polio vaccine protects against infection from the polio virus. The vaccine, called Inactivated Polio Vaccine (IPV), is approved by Health Canada.

Who should get the polio vaccine?

Polio vaccine is given mostly as one booster dose or shot to adults who had a series of polio vaccine in childhood and are now going to be working in or traveling to an area of the world where polio still occurs.

A series of polio vaccine doses can be given to people who have not been vaccinated yet and who may be exposed to polioviruses through work or travel.

A vaccine series includes two doses, given 4 to 8 weeks apart, and a third dose 6 to 12 months after the second.

In young children, immunization against polio is combined with other vaccines, such as diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough) and *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib). For more information on the combined vaccines, see the following BC HealthFiles [#15a Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis, Polio \(DTaP-IPV\) Vaccine](#), and [#15b Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis, Polio, Haemophilus influenzae Type b \(DTaP-IPV-Hib\) Vaccine](#).

The polio vaccine series can also be given to infants and children who do not need protection from diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis and Hib because they have already received these other vaccines.

Possible Reactions to the Vaccine

It is much safer to get the vaccine than to get polio disease.

Common reactions to the vaccine may include soreness, swelling or redness where the shot was given. Some may also have a fever.

Acetaminophen or Tylenol® can be given for fever or soreness. ASA or Aspirin® should NOT be given to anyone under 20 years of age due to the risk of Reye Syndrome.

It is important to stay in the clinic for 15 minutes after getting any vaccine because there is an extremely rare possibility of a life-threatening allergic reaction called anaphylaxis.

This may include hives, difficulty breathing, or swelling of the throat, tongue or lips. If this happens after you leave the clinic, call 911 or the local emergency number. This reaction can be treated, and occurs in less than one in a million people who get the vaccine.

Report serious or unexpected reactions to your public health nurse or doctor.

Who should not get the polio vaccine?

Speak with a public health nurse or doctor if you have had a life-threatening reaction to a previous dose of any polio vaccine or any component of the vaccine, including neomycin, streptomycin or polymyxin B.

What is polio?

Polio is a disease caused by infection with a virus. While some polio infections show no symptoms, others can result in paralysis of arms or legs and even death.

Polio virus is contained in the bowel movements (stool) of infected people. If stool contaminates the hands, water or food, others can become infected.

Due to immunization, polio has been eliminated in many parts of the world. In 1994, Canada was certified as a “polio free” country. Within the last 30 years, the only polio cases in British Columbia were non-vaccinated residents who had contact with polio-infected visitors from another country.

Mature Minor Consent

Effort is made to seek parental or guardian consent prior to immunization. Children under the age of 19 who are able to understand the risks and benefits may consent to or refuse immunizations, regardless of the parent’s or guardian’s wishes. It is recommended that parents/guardians and their minor children discuss immunizations beforehand, and ask the nurse or doctor any questions.

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