

About Polio

Poliomyelitis (polio) is a highly infectious disease caused by a virus. In environments with poor levels of hygiene and water quality, and within proximity to sewage, the virus can easily infect people. Most people infected with polio have no signs of illness and are never aware they have been infected. However, 1 in 200 cases leads to irreversible paralysis.

Vaccination Strategy

The Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) is a major global health partnership that includes the U.S. government, UNICEF, the World Health Organization, Rotary International, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The goal of the GPEI is to complete the eradication and containment of polio. Launched in 1988 after the World Health Assembly passed a resolution to eradicate polio, the GPEI, along with its partners, has helped countries make huge progress protecting the global population from this debilitating disease. As a result, global incidence of polio has decreased by 99.9%. An estimated 16 million people are walking today who would have otherwise been paralyzed by the disease, and more than 1.5 million people are alive whose lives would have otherwise been lost.

Now the task is to tackle polio in its last few strongholds – Nigeria, Afghanistan, and Pakistan – and rid the world of the final 0.1% of polio cases. GPEI will continue to work with country governments to strengthen routine immunization systems, strengthen polio case tracking and response systems, and conduct mass immunization campaigns where needed.

Role of Shot@Life

Shot@Life fundraises to support GPEI. Since the launch of the campaign in 2012, Shot@Life has raised enough funding to provide the equivalent of more than 23 million polio vaccines to children in developing countries.* Additionally, Shot@Life's network of trained advocates works to ensure the U.S. government remains an active partner and funder of GPEI.

Sources:

Global Polio Eradication Initiative <http://www.polioeradication.org/Polioandprevention.aspx>
World Health Organization - <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs114/en/>
*Funds raised through the end of CY2017.

Key Facts

Polio mainly affects **children under five** years of age.

Polio cases have **decreased by over 99%** since 1988.

Polio anywhere is a threat everywhere — as long as a single child remains infected, children in all countries are at risk of contracting the disease.



Updated 9/2018