

Polio

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About Polio

Polio is a highly infectious disease caused by the poliovirus. While most people infected with polio are asymptomatic and remain unaware of their infection, 1 in 200 polio cases leads to irreversible paralysis.

The first effective polio vaccine was developed in 1952. In 1962, an oral polio vaccine developed by Albert Sabin became available, allowing health workers to immunize children around the world at greater speeds. The United States has been polio-free since 1979, Asia was declared polio-free in 2014, and Africa was declared polio-free in 2020.

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. Launched in 1988 after the World Health Assembly passed a resolution to eradicate polio, the GPEI and its partners have helped countries make huge progress in protecting populations from this debilitating disease. As a result, the global incidence of polio has decreased by 99.9%, and more than 19 million people are walking today who would have otherwise been paralyzed by the disease (WHO).

Now the task remains to tackle polio in its last few strongholds—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's trained advocates work to ensure the U.S. government remains an active partner and funder of polio eradication efforts, namely through the federal budget line items for USAID and CDC's global polio eradication programs that total more than \$250 million annually. Since 2012, Shot@Life has also separately raised money to provide more than 63 million polio vaccines to children in low-income countries.

Sources:

Global Polio Eradication Initiative - polioeradication.org/polio-today/polio-prevention/

World Health Organization - who.int/news-room/photo-story/photo-story-detail/10-facts-on-polio-eradication



Did You Know?

- Polio mainly affects children under five.
- Polio cases have decreased by over 99.9% 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.