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 What is polio?

Polio is a disease caused by a virus. It enters the body through the mouth. Usually it does not cause serious illness. But sometimes it causes paralysis (can't move arm or leg), and it can cause meningitis (irritation of the lining of the brain). It can kill people who get it, usually by paralyzing the muscles that help them breathe.

Polio used to be very common in the United States. It paralyzed and killed thousands of people a year before we had a vaccine.

2 Why get vaccinated?

Inactivated Polio Vaccine (IPV) can prevent polio.

History: A 1916 polio epidemic in the United States killed 6,000 people and paralyzed 27,000 more. In the early 1950's there were more than 25,000 cases of polio reported each year. Polio vaccination was begun in 1955. By 1960 the number of reported cases had dropped to about 3,000, and by 1979 there were only about 10. The success of polio vaccination in the U.S. and other countries has sparked a world-wide effort to eliminate polio.

Today: Polio has been eliminated from the United States. But the disease is still common in some parts of the world. It would only take one person infected with polio virus 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.

3 Who should get polio vaccine and when?

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

Children

Children get 4 doses of IPV, at these ages:

- A dose at 2 months
- A dose at 4 months
- A dose at 6-18 months
- A booster dose at 4-6 years

Some "combination" vaccines (several different vaccines in the same shot) contain IPV. Children getting these vaccines may get one more (5th) dose of polio vaccine. This is not a problem.

Adults

Most adults 18 and older do not need polio vaccine because they were vaccinated as children. But some adults are at higher risk and should consider polio vaccination:

(1) people traveling to areas of the world where polio is common,
(2) laboratory workers who might handle polio virus, and
(3) health care workers treating patients who could have polio.

Adults in these three groups:

- who have **never been vaccinated against polio** should get 3 doses of IPV:
  - Two doses separated by 1 to 2 months, and
  - A third dose 6 to 12 months after the second.
- who have had **1 or 2 doses** of polio vaccine in the past should get the remaining 1 or 2 doses.

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It doesn't matter how long it has been since the earlier dose(s).

- who have had **3 or more doses** of polio vaccine in the past may get a booster dose of IPV.

Your doctor can give you more information.

4 Some people should not get IPV or should wait.

These people should not get IPV:

- Anyone with a life-threatening allergy to any component of IPV, including the antibiotics neomycin, streptomycin or polymyxin B, should not get polio vaccine. Tell your doctor if you have any severe allergies.
- Anyone who had a severe allergic reaction to a previous polio shot should not get another one.

These people should wait:

- Anyone who is moderately or severely ill at the time the shot is scheduled should usually wait until they recover before getting polio vaccine. People with minor illnesses, such as a cold, may be vaccinated.

Ask your doctor for more information.

5 What are the risks from IPV?

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.

However, any medicine could cause a serious side effect, such as a severe allergic reaction or even death. The risk of polio vaccine causing serious harm is extremely small.

6 What if there is a moderate or severe problem?

What should I look for?

- Look for any unusual condition, such as a serious allergic reaction, high fever, or unusual behavior.

If a serious allergic reaction occurred, it would happen within a few minutes to a few hours after the shot. Signs of a serious allergic reaction can include difficulty breathing, weakness, hoarseness or wheezing, a fast heart beat, hives, dizziness, paleness, or swelling of the throat.

What should I do?

- **Call** a doctor, or get the person to a doctor right away.
- **Tell** your doctor what happened, the date and time it happened, and when the vaccination was given.
- **Ask** your doctor to report the reaction by filing a Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) form.

  Or you can file this report through the VAERS website at **www.vaers.hhs.gov** or by calling **1-800-822-7967**.

  VAERS does not provide medical advice.

7 The National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program

The National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program (VICP) was created in 1986.

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**.

8 How can I learn more?

- Ask your doctor They 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**