

Polio Case in Rockland!

Is my child at risk?



Polio virus found in sewage samples



March of Dimes 1954 Campaign



Salk: TIME Magazine Man of the Year 1954



Sabin: US stamp 2006.

An unvaccinated Rockland County adult was diagnosed with paralytic *polio* in July, 2022. He had the same strain of *polio* being found in sewage samples in Rockland, Orange, Sullivan counties, and in New York City.

While *polio* is most known for the horrible symptoms it can cause, 70% get no symptoms, 25% experience mild flu-like symptoms, and about 1% develop severe symptoms, including paralysis. It has an incubation period of 3 to 6 days. Paralysis, if it occurs, happens between 7 to 21 days. There is no medication to treat *polio*.

Polio only spreads in humans and it is a swallowed virus. In the United States *polio* spread mostly in the summer and early fall. So *polio* virus in wastewater (sewage) means there have been other unreported cases in people with no symptoms or mild symptoms.

Dr. Jonas Salk developed an inactivated (not live) *poliovirus* vaccine (IPV), given by injection, which was released for use in 1955. In 1962 Dr. Albert Sabin developed an oral *polio* vaccine which was used in this country until 2000. Both are very effective vaccines and give lifelong immunity. The last wild type *polio* outbreak in the United States happened in 1979. The oral vaccine was discontinued because of rare (1 in 750,000) risk of live vaccine virus *polio*.

Your child is well protected after getting at least three of the recommended four IPV vaccine doses. All children should get four doses of the *polio* vaccine: First: age 6 weeks to 2 months, Second: age 4 months, Third: age 6 through 18 months, Fourth: age 4 to 6 years.

- Adults who are unvaccinated or are unsure if they have been immunized should receive 3 doses.

- Adults who have only had 1 or 2 doses of the *polio* vaccine in the past should get the remaining 1 or 2 doses. (It does not matter how long it has been since the earlier doses.)

- Adults who are at increased risk of exposure to *poliovirus* may take a single booster dose of IPV (even if they had *polio* vaccine in past). Increased risk means those who may have been exposed to the individual with paralytic *polio*, including healthcare professionals.

Handwashing with soap can help prevent the spread of germs. Alcohol-based sanitizers may not work as well against *polio* virus.

For more information on *polio*, the situation in New York State, and *polio* immunization: health.ny.gov/polio or health.ny.gov/polio/immunization

Bottom line: If you and your child have had at least 3 doses of polio vaccine, there is basically no risk!

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