



# Protect your child against polio now

## Should my child get immunized against polio?

All babies should get their polio immunizations starting at age 6 weeks – 2 months old for the safe protection against polio they need. Children should receive a total of three doses by the time they are 2 years old, and a fourth dose before they start school.

**If your child has not received their polio immunization(s), is not up to date with their polio immunization schedule, or if you're unsure about their polio immunization status, contact a health care provider right away.**

Many New Yorkers, including children, may be behind on routine health care visits, and your child's health care provider will make sure your child receives or catches up on all recommended doses.

## Polio immunization schedule

Dose Number	Age
1	6 weeks – 2 months old
2	4 months old
3	6 months – 18 months old
4	4 – 6 years old

## Why does my child need to be up to date with their polio immunizations?

Children always need protection against polio. In fact, an up-to-date polio immunization schedule is a requirement for all school-aged children attending public or private day care or school in New York.

But it's important that little ones get their polio immunizations on time, even before they may be in day care or school. Children who are not up to date with their polio immunizations are at risk of infection and developing severe disease (including paralysis). Paralysis (can't move parts of the body) caused by polio is often permanent, resulting in lifelong disability.

## Why is polio a risk for my child now?

On July 21, a case of polio was identified among a young, unvaccinated adult in Rockland County. The individual experienced severe symptoms, including paralysis, and was hospitalized. Wastewater monitoring has now identified signs of poliovirus in sewage water in Rockland County, Orange County, Sullivan County, and New York City, meaning the virus is already likely spreading in these communities (when individuals are infected with polio, even if they don't have any symptoms, they shed virus in their poop). There is no cure for polio, but you can prevent your child from disease by ensuring they are up to date with their immunizations.

**Any child not up to date on their polio vaccines—particularly in the areas where poliovirus has been detected—is at risk of getting severely ill from polio.**

## What is polio?

Polio is a debilitating and life-threatening disease. A virus that can affect the brain and spinal cord, polio can cause paralysis (can't move parts of the body) or even death. This makes polio very dangerous, especially for young children who are unvaccinated or not up to date with their polio immunization schedule.

## How does polio spread?

- Polio is very contagious, and people can spread the virus even if they don't have symptoms or know they are infected.
- Polio spreads from person to person through contact with the poop, sneeze, or cough droplets of an infected person.
- This can happen when someone is in close contact with someone who has polio, such as by caring for them, playing with them, or sharing food or utensils with them.
- For young children, who often play or are cared for in groups, the risk is especially great. Little children also may not be able to keep up with washing their hands with soap and water like adults can.
- New Yorkers should also know that alcohol-based sanitizers do not get rid of all types of germs, including polio.

## How can my child get the polio vaccine?

All pediatricians and family health care providers, including health care providers who serve children through clinics, should have polio vaccine available for your child. Contact a health care provider or your local county health department to schedule their polio immunization appointment as soon as possible.

## Which vaccine is my child being offered?

Your child will receive the inactivated polio vaccine (IPV), which is the only vaccine available in the United States. IPV is safe and effective. IPV protects 99 out of 100 children from disease, including paralysis, if they receive all the recommended doses. Given in either the arm or the leg depending on the patient's age, it's important that children get all recommended doses for the best protection possible.

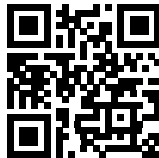
## Are there any side effects from this vaccine?

IPV is a well-established vaccine that is very safe. Most children do not have any problems with it, and your child may not notice any changes after getting their shot. Like after any vaccine, it's also possible for your child to feel a little unwell. For example, children may have a sore spot where the shot was given. These symptoms are usually mild and go away on their own in a few days.

**Schedule your child's polio immunization today.**

**Want to learn more?**

[health.ny.gov/polio](http://health.ny.gov/polio)



**Department  
of Health**