

# Polio Elimination in the United States

Updated August 3, 2022

**July 21, 2022:** CDC is aware of a case of polio in an unvaccinated individual from Rockland County, New York, and is consulting with the New York State Department of Health on their investigation. Public health experts are working to understand how and where the individual was infected and provide protective measures, such as vaccination services to the community to prevent the spread of polio to under- and unvaccinated individuals. There is no cure for polio, but it is preventable through safe and effective [vaccination](#).

Poliovirus infections still occur in some countries. Get your child vaccinated on schedule to protect them from polio.

## Polio Once Caused Widespread Panic



In the late 1940s, polio outbreaks in the U.S. increased in frequency and size, disabling an average of more than 35,000 people each year. Parents were frightened to let their children go outside, especially in the summer when the virus seemed to peak. Travel and commerce between affected cities were sometimes restricted. Public health officials imposed quarantines (used to separate and restrict the movement of well people who may have been exposed to a contagious disease to see if they become ill) on homes and towns where polio cases were diagnosed.

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Thanks to the polio vaccine, dedicated health care professionals, and parents who vaccinate their children on schedule, wild poliovirus has been eliminated in this country for more than 30 years.

- Since 1979, no cases of polio caused by wild poliovirus have originated in the U.S.
- However, the wild virus has been brought into the country by travelers with polio. The last time this happened for wild poliovirus was in 1993.

**It takes only one traveler with polio to bring the disease into the United States.**

People most at risk for infection are:

- Those who never had polio vaccine
- Those who never received all the recommended vaccine doses
- Those traveling to [areas that could put them at risk for getting polio](#)

The best way to keep people safe from polio is to **maintain high immunity (protection) against polio in the population through vaccination.**

**Cases of Polio Paralysis in the United States Before (1950s) and After Polio Vaccine Introduction**



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Polio was once one of the most feared diseases in the U.S. In the early 1950s, before polio vaccines were available, polio outbreaks caused more than 15,000 cases of paralysis each year. Following introduction of vaccines—specifically, trivalent inactivated poliovirus vaccine (IPV) in 1955 and trivalent oral poliovirus vaccine (OPV) in 1963—the number of polio cases fell rapidly to less than 100 in the 1960s and fewer than 10 in the 1970s.

- [Polio](#)
- [Polio Vaccination](#)
- [History of Polio Timeline](#) 
- [Polio Vaccine: Vaccine-Derived Poliovirus](#)
- [Whatever Happened to Polio?](#) 
- [March of Dimes](#) 
- [Global Polio Eradication Initiative](#) 