

What Adults in the U.S. Should Know About | Polio

Adult Vaccination for Polio

In the United States, the risk of getting polio is extremely low. Most people are vaccinated against polio during childhood, and this provides protection against serious illness, including paralytic polio which is caused by poliovirus. Studies suggest people who completed their polio vaccination during childhood are likely protected throughout adulthood.



▲ How concerned should I be about a polio case being found in the U.S.?

Right now, the risk to people who have completed their polio vaccination is low.

Most of the U.S. population have protection against paralytic polio because they were vaccinated during childhood. People who never received polio vaccination or have not completed their polio vaccination series are at risk and should be vaccinated. Paralysis caused by poliovirus cannot be cured, but it can be prevented through vaccination.

While any polio case is concerning, it does not change the current vaccine recommendations. If you or your child have not been vaccinated against polio or have an incomplete series of polio vaccine, you should talk to your doctor about getting vaccinated right away.

▲ Should I get a polio booster?

Adults who completed the polio vaccine series as children in the United States and are planning to travel to countries with increased risk of polio or have a higher risk for exposure to polio can receive one lifetime booster dose.

If you are going to [travel internationally](#), check with your healthcare provider about getting one lifetime polio booster.

At this time, polio boosters are not recommended for travel within the United States.

▲ How long does the polio vaccine last?

We do not know exactly how long vaccine protection lasts, but a complete vaccine series is likely to protect you for decades. This includes adults who had received oral polio vaccine (OPV) as children decades earlier. However, adults who completed their polio vaccination series as children and are at higher risk for poliovirus exposure can receive one lifetime IPV (inactivated polio vaccine, the type used in the U.S. now) booster.

▲ Who is at higher risk for *exposure* to poliovirus?

Anyone who is not fully vaccinated against polio is at risk for polio.

However, there are some situations that put people at increased risk for exposure to poliovirus such as:

- ▲ Travelers who have recently traveled or are going to areas or countries where poliovirus spreads.
- ▲ Laboratory and healthcare workers who handle specimens that might contain polioviruses.
- ▲ Healthcare workers who are treating patients who could have polio or have close contact with a person who could be infected with poliovirus.
- ▲ People who are in contact with or caring for a person who could be infected with poliovirus or has been exposed to poliovirus.
- ▲ Unvaccinated adults whose children will be receiving oral poliovirus vaccine (for example, international adoptees or refugees).

Talk with your healthcare provider to find out if you may need additional poliovirus vaccination. Their recommendations for poliovirus vaccination will depend on how many doses of polio vaccine you have already received and the time available before protection is needed.

▲ What if I've been vaccinated against polio outside of the U.S.?

If you or anyone in your family received polio vaccination outside of the United States, make sure it meets the U.S. recommendations. Some oral polio vaccine used outside the U.S. since April 1, 2016, do not provide protection against all three strains of poliovirus.

Only written, dated records are acceptable as evidence of previous vaccination. If you do not have these records, you should be vaccinated using the U.S. schedule.

Talk with your healthcare provider to understand what type of polio vaccine you had, or what type you may need.

▲ Where can I find history of my previous polio vaccination?

CDC does not have access to an individual's vaccination records. However, states have [Immunization Information Systems \(IIS\)](#) that keep records of some vaccines given to you or your child by a healthcare provider.

Talk to your healthcare provider to see what polio vaccination documentation you or your child has to make sure you and your family are up to date on recommended vaccinations.

If you need a vaccination tracking card or want to get a copy of your vaccination records, contact your healthcare provider or your state health department's immunization program that handles the state's immunization registry.



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