

Polio Vaccine (Inactivated)

Vaccines have saved more lives compared to any other medical intervention. Vaccines help the immune system to recognize and fight bacteria and viruses that cause serious diseases.

Polio is a vaccine preventable disease.

- Polio (poliomyelitis) is very contagious and caused by polioviruses types 1, 2 and 3.
- Due to immunization, types 2 and 3 have been eliminated. Type 1 remains in certain countries.
- Children younger than 5 years old are more susceptible to polio.
- Polioviruses are spread for up to 6 weeks in the stool of infected people.
- Infection starts within a few weeks after contact with polio-contaminated food and water.
- Polio symptoms include fever, tiredness, headache and vomiting. Most polio cases have no symptoms.
- About 1 in 100 people get paralysis and of these people, up to 1 in 20 children and 3 in 10 adults will die.
- There is no treatment for polio and previously infected people can be re-infected with another type of poliovirus.
- Some people develop muscle weakness ([post-polio syndrome](#)) many years later.

How can polio be prevented?

- Be immunized. When you and your child are immunized, you help protect others as well.
- Practice good hygiene (e.g. handwashing).

Who can get this vaccine for free?

- Those who have not completed an appropriate primary series including children, select healthcare workers and students, and travellers.
- NOTE: For young children, the polio vaccine is combined with other vaccines, such as diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough) and *Haemophilus influenzae* type b.

Who should not get this vaccine?

- Individuals who have a serious acute illness, with or without a fever, should delay immunizations.
- People who had a serious or life-threatening reaction to a previous dose of a polio-containing vaccine, or any components of the vaccine.

What are common reactions to this vaccine?

- **Vaccines are very safe and effective. It is much safer to get this vaccine than to get this serious and contagious disease.**
- Temporary pain, redness and swelling where the needle was given.
- Mild fever, fatigue and headache may occur.
- These reactions are mild and generally last 1 to 2 days.
- Only treat a fever (at least 6 to 8 hours after immunization) **if you / your child are uncomfortable and not sleeping.**

It is important to stay in the clinic for 15 minutes after getting any vaccine because there is an extremely rare possibility of a life-threatening allergic reaction called anaphylaxis. This may include hives, difficulty breathing, or swelling of the throat, tongue or lips. This reaction can be treated, and occurs in less than one in one million people who get the vaccine. **If this happens after you leave the clinic, get medical attention or call 911 right away.**

Use **Acetaminophen** (all ages; Tylenol®, Tempra®) or **Ibuprofen (6 months & older;** Advil®, Motrin®) to treat fevers and pain. **Never give ASA** (Aspirin®) to children younger than 18 years old because of the serious risk of Reye's syndrome.

Who should you report reactions to?

- Report any adverse or unexpected reactions to your local public health nurse, your doctor, nurse practitioner or call 811 as soon as possible.

Talk to a public health nurse:

- If you have questions or concerns about you or your child's reaction to an immunization.
- If you or your child had to go to a doctor, a hospital or to a health centre with a symptom that might be related to immunization.

What does this vaccine contain?

IMOVAX® Polio contains purified inactivated poliomyelitis viral strains (types 1, 2 and 3), 2-phenoxyethanol, and traces of formaldehyde, calf serum protein, neomycin, streptomycin, polymyxin B, and medium 199 Hanks. Thimerosal-free. Latex-free.

For more information, contact your local public health office, your physician, nurse practitioner, HealthLine online or by calling 811.

References: [Canadian Immunization Guide](#).

IMOVAX® Polio product monograph (2011).

Mature Minor Consent

It is recommended that parents/guardians discuss consent for immunization with their children. Efforts are first made to get parental/guardian consent for immunizations. However, children at least 13 years of age up to and including 17 years of age, who are able to understand the benefits and possible reactions for each vaccine and the risks of not getting immunized, can legally consent to or refuse immunizations in Saskatchewan by providing mature minor informed consent to a healthcare provider.

Provincial immunization fact sheets are available at www.saskatchewan.ca/immunize.