



UK Health  
Security  
Agency



# Polio is spreading

in London, US and Israel

## What is polio?

Polio is a disease caused by the poliovirus. The virus can infect the spinal cord and cause permanent paralysis or even death. Polio is preventable, only by immunisation.

**There is no cure for polio.**

There are now **thousands of children under 10** who are at risk **in the UK** because they are not up to date with their routine vaccines.



**75%** of people (approximately) who are infected with polio will not experience any symptoms and will not know they are contagious



For every case of paralysis, between **100 and 1,000** people have been infected

## Why is polio circulating in sewage in London?

This is happening because not enough people are being vaccinated. That is why we are offering a booster dose of polio vaccine to all children aged 1 to 9 in London. For more information about the vaccines you can read the leaflet in English here [www.gov.uk/government/publications/polio-booster-campaign-resources](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/polio-booster-campaign-resources) and in Yiddish. See bottom of leaflet more more information.

## Who is at risk?



**newborn babies**



**children under 2 years**

who have not completed their polio immunisation schedule



**anyone not fully immunised**

including children, adults and pregnant women



**immunocompromised individuals**

speak to your doctor if the polio booster is right for you



## The only protection is immunisation

The only protection for you or your child is immunisation. Check your child's red book or contact your GP practice to make sure your child is up to date.

## The polio immunisation is proven highly effective

### 1950s

There are around 4,000 polio cases each year in the UK

### 1955

The polio immunisation developed by Dr Jonas Salk is licensed

### 1956

Polio vaccine is introduced in the UK

### 1970s

The last outbreak of polio in the UK

### 1984

Last natural case of polio in the UK

### 2003

Europe declared polio free

## Polio spreads through:



contact with the fecal matter (poo) of an infected person



droplets in a sneeze or cough from someone with infection

## Symptoms

Approximately 25% will experience flu-like symptoms such as:

- fever
- fatigue
- stomach pain
- sickness
- sore throat
- headache

**More serious symptoms can take up to 30 days to appear and include:**



severe headache



severe muscle pains



stiffness in the neck and back



dislike of bright lights



paralysis or even death

### 2022

Children in London offered a polio booster. This follows a highly successful polio booster campaign in Israel. All families asked to check if everyone is up to date with their routine vaccinations now.