



# Polio Eradication

## –FIELD GUIDE

In 1991, the Western Hemisphere witnessed its last case of polio caused by wild poliovirus. In 1994, the International Commission for the Certification of Poliomyelitis Eradication declared that circulation of wild poliovirus had been interrupted in the Americas.

The strategies that made polio eradication in the Americas possible are the same ones currently being implemented on a global scale and, essentially, those that will make it possible to keep the countries of the Americas polio-free: to achieve and maintain high vaccination coverage (through vaccination days, if necessary) and adequate epidemiological surveillance. In the Region of the Americas, this means the immediate investigation of cases and the aggressive control of outbreaks.

These were the strategies used to combat the polio outbreak in the Dominican Republic and Haiti, in 2000 and 2001, which was caused by a virus derived from the Sabin vaccine. This demonstrated that reversion of the vaccinal virus to neurovirulence is a constant threat if countries do not maintain adequate vaccination coverage; that surveillance of flaccid paralyses should be kept at an optimal level during and after eradication; and that the vaccination strategies used during the eradication effort continue to be valid.

*Polio Eradication: Field Guide* provides the knowledge and strategies necessary for health workers to keep the Hemisphere polio-free and to enable them to quickly and effectively control new outbreaks. More than a guide to achieving eradication, it is a reference manual for maintaining polio eradication.

This publication—one of a series of immunization guides that also address measles, neonatal tetanus, rubella, yellow fever, diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, *Haemophilus influenzae* type b, and hepatitis B—is an essential tool for local and regional health workers, health promoters, physicians, nurses, and students in the field.

### This publication includes sections on:

- Epidemiology
- Clinical Aspects
- Vaccines
- Vaccination Activities
- Epidemiological Surveillance

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