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The data

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The disease

Polio is a HIGHLY CONTAGIOUS disease caused by the poliovirus. It mainly affects children UNDER FIVE YEARS of age. There is NO CURE. The only option is prevention through vaccination.

Symptoms

- Most people have NO SYMPTOMS.
- 5 to 10 out of every 100 individuals infected with this virus may have RESPIRATORY SYMPTOMS.
- In 1 out of 200 infected people, poliovirus destroys parts of the NERVOUS SYSTEM and causes permanent PARALYSIS of the legs or arms.
- Rarely, the virus can attack the parts of the BRAIN that help breathing, which can cause DEATH.

Vaccines

- Two types of polio vaccines: ORAL VACCINE with attenuated viruses (OPV) and inactivated INJECTABLE vaccine (IPV).
- Both vaccines are used in the Region of the Americas and are safe and effective.

Transmission

- Person-to-person, by the FECAL-ORAL ROUTE (contact with objects contaminated by infected feces).
- More rarely by RESPIRATORY SECRETIONS.

Calendar

- Primary Scheme: At least 2 DOSES of IPV vaccine and ONE DOSE of OPV vaccine in the first year of life.
- Countries have DIFFERENT SCHEDULES and in some, IPV is administered combined with other vaccines (e.g. Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis).

For more information, visit: www.paho.org/immunization