

# Polio Booster Vaccine

## What is polio?

Polio is a virus which causes fever, vomiting and muscle stiffness. If the nerves are affected it can cause permanent paralysis - that is the loss the use of the muscles. Polio can paralyse the breathing and swallowing muscles, leading to death.

## How do people get polio?

Polio is a highly infectious disease spread mainly through close contact with an infected person. The virus lives in the gut and the throat.

Polio is spread though the faeces (bowel movements) of an infected person. The virus can also be spread through saliva.

The virus may be spread due to poor hand washing or water contamination.

## How can polio be prevented?

The best way to prevent polio is by immunisation with Inactivated (Killed) Polio Vaccine (IPV).

Washing your hands thoroughly after going to the toilet and before eating and preparing food will also protect you.

## Why am I or my family being offered polio vaccine?

The World Health Organization (WHO) issued an alert about a polio outbreak in Syria in 2014.

## Who needs a polio booster?

Anyone **aged 10 years and older** needs a polio vaccine (unless they had one in the last 12 months). This booster dose will provide additional protection to you.

### **Which polio vaccine will I get?**

It is not possible to get polio (IPV) vaccine on its own.

IPV Boostrix or Revaxis is the name given to the combined vaccine which protects against polio, diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough) and tetanus.

The vaccine is given as one injection in your arm.

### **Is there anyone who should not get this vaccine?**

There are very few people who should not get this vaccine. Please inform your GP if you have had an allergic reaction to any previous vaccine or if you have had a reaction to an antibiotic.

You should delay getting the vaccine if you are ill with a high temperature.

### **What can I expect following vaccination?**

Most people have no problems following this vaccine. The arm may be sore, and or swollen and red where the injection was given. This only lasts a short time. You may also get a headache and fever – if this happens you can take paracetamol or ibuprofen and drink plenty of water.

Your GP will give you a record of your vaccination – keep this document safely.

### **What about my children less than 10 years of age?**

In Ireland polio vaccine is given as part as part of the '6-in-1' vaccine (at 2, 4 and 6 months of age) and another dose is given as part of the '4-in-1' vaccine at 4-5 years of age.

If your children have missed out on these vaccines, they also need to get a polio booster vaccine. Please discuss any queries you have with your GP.

### **Where can I find out more?**

You can ask for further information from your GP, or Public Health Nurse or see [www.immunisation.ie](http://www.immunisation.ie)