

VACCINES ENDED POLIO IN THE U.S.



BUT THE FIGHT

ISN'T OVER YET

Polio once wreaked havoc on communities across the U.S. and around the world. The highly infectious disease invades the nervous system and can cause severe illness and total paralysis in a matter of hours, mainly in young children.

With vaccines and high vaccination rates, the tragedy of polio and children with **permanent paralysis** and breathing through **iron lungs** is decades in the past.

However, the polio crisis will resurge if vaccines do not remain a tool available to the American public and vaccination rates do not remain high.

Because polio is not eradicated around the world, the U.S. is still at risk if vaccination rates decline.



Polio Vaccine: Before and After¹

1952

The FDA approved the **first polio vaccine**.

Just before the polio vaccine became available, the U.S. faced **60,000 known cases** of polio, including 21,000 causing paralysis.

1955

1960

The FDA approved **multiple more polio vaccines**.

Within five years of polio vaccine availability in the U.S., only **61 cases** of paralytic polio.

1961-63

1979

Last cases of polio reported in the U.S.



The Future of Polio Vaccinations

Polio vaccines have prevented an estimated

20 million cases of paralysis

in children since 1988.²

Failing to globally eradicate polio could result in a resurgence of

200,000 new cases annually

within a decade.³

Ongoing eradication efforts through vaccination will generate

\$14 billion in cumulative costs savings

by 2050, compared to the cost of controlling the virus.³

Safe and effective vaccines are crucial to protect ourselves, our loved ones, and our communities by preventing the spread of illnesses.

Visit fightinfectiousdisease.org to learn more.

1 [Epidemiology and Prevention of Vaccine Preventable Diseases – Chapter 18: Poliomyelitis](#) (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

2 [About Global Polio Eradication](#) (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

3 [Our goal to eradicate polio worldwide](#) (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation)

