

## **Polio vaccine (IPV)**

Polio is a disease caused by a virus that enters the body through the mouth. Sometimes it does not cause serious illness. But sometimes it causes paralysis (can't move an arm or a leg). It can kill people who get it, usually by paralyzing the muscles that help them breathe.

Polio used to be very common in the United States. It paralyzed and killed thousands of people a year before we had a vaccine for it. In the early 1950's there were more than 20,000 cases of polio each year. Polio vaccination was begun in 1955. By 1960 the number of cases had dropped to about 3,000, and by 1979 there were only about 10. The success of polio vaccination in the U.S. and other countries sparked a world-wide effort to eliminate polio.

Today, no wild polio has been reported in the United States for over 20 years. But the disease is still common in some parts of the world. It would only take one case of polio from another country to bring the disease back if we were not protected by vaccine. If the effort to eliminate the disease from the world is successful, some day we won't need polio vaccine. Until then, we need to keep getting our children vaccinated.

The polio vaccine is usually given as a series of three doses during the first year, with a booster dose at 4 to 6 years of age.