

Immunization - Inactivated Polio Vaccine (IPV)

This fact sheet provides basic information only. It must not take the place of medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Always talk to a health care professional about any health concerns you have, and before you make any changes to your diet, lifestyle or treatment.

Vaccines (injections or shots) are the best way to protect against some very serious infections. The National Advisory Committee on Immunization strongly recommends routine immunization. This vaccine protects children and adults against polio. Vaccination against polio is required by law for all children attending school in Ontario (unless exempted).

What is polio?

Polio is a dangerous disease that people can get from drinking water or eating food with the polio germ in it. It is also spread from person to person. This disease can cause nerve damage and paralyze a person for life. It can paralyze muscles used for breathing, talking, eating and walking. It can also cause death.

How well does IPV protect against polio?

The vaccine protects 99 percent of people who get all their shots.

When should IPV be given?

IPV can be given alone or in combination with other vaccines. It is included in the combination vaccines routinely given to infants and children. IPV should be given to anyone who has not completed the series recommended for their age.

Your doctor/nurse practitioner will decide which vaccines you need.

This vaccine is not given routinely to adults. Only adults who are likely to come in contact with the polio germ need to receive the polio vaccine. These adults include:

- unimmunized adults (including those with unknown polio immunization history) who are planning to travel to countries where there are polio outbreaks. They should receive a series of 3 doses according to the current Publicly Funded Immunization Schedules for Ontario;
- Adults who are planning to travel to countries where poliovirus or vaccine-derived poliovirus outbreaks are occurring. They should receive a dose of IPV if their last polio immunization was 10 or more years ago;
- Laboratory workers who handle specimens that may contain the polio germ;
- Health care workers who look after patients who may have the polio germ.

Is IPV safe?

Yes. Side effects of this polio vaccine (IPV) are mild and last for only a few days after getting the shot. Some people get mild pain, swelling and redness at the spot where the shot was given. There is no risk of a pregnant woman or anyone else catching polio from someone who has been recently vaccinated with this vaccine as it is a killed vaccine.

You should always discuss the benefits and risks of any vaccine with your doctor/nurse practitioner.

When should I call my doctor/nurse practitioner?

Call your doctor/nurse practitioner or go to the nearest hospital emergency department if any of the following symptoms develop within three days of getting the shot:

- hives;
- swelling of the face or mouth;
- trouble breathing;
- very pale colour and serious drowsiness;
- other serious problems.

Who should not get IPV?

The doctor/nurse practitioner may decide not to give the IPV vaccine if the person has:

- a high fever or serious infection worse than a cold;
- a severe allergy to antibiotics called neomycin or polymyxin B;
- a serious allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) to this vaccine;
- a severe allergy or other serious reaction to any component of the vaccine.

Who should I talk to if I have any more questions about IPV?

Talk to your doctor/nurse practitioner or call your local public health unit for more information.

Your record of protection

After any immunization, make sure your personal immunization record (i.e., the "yellow card") is updated. If your child is attending child care or school, inform your local public health unit each time your child receives an immunization. An immunization record is required for school and child care attendance, and for certain types of travel and work, so keep it in a safe place.