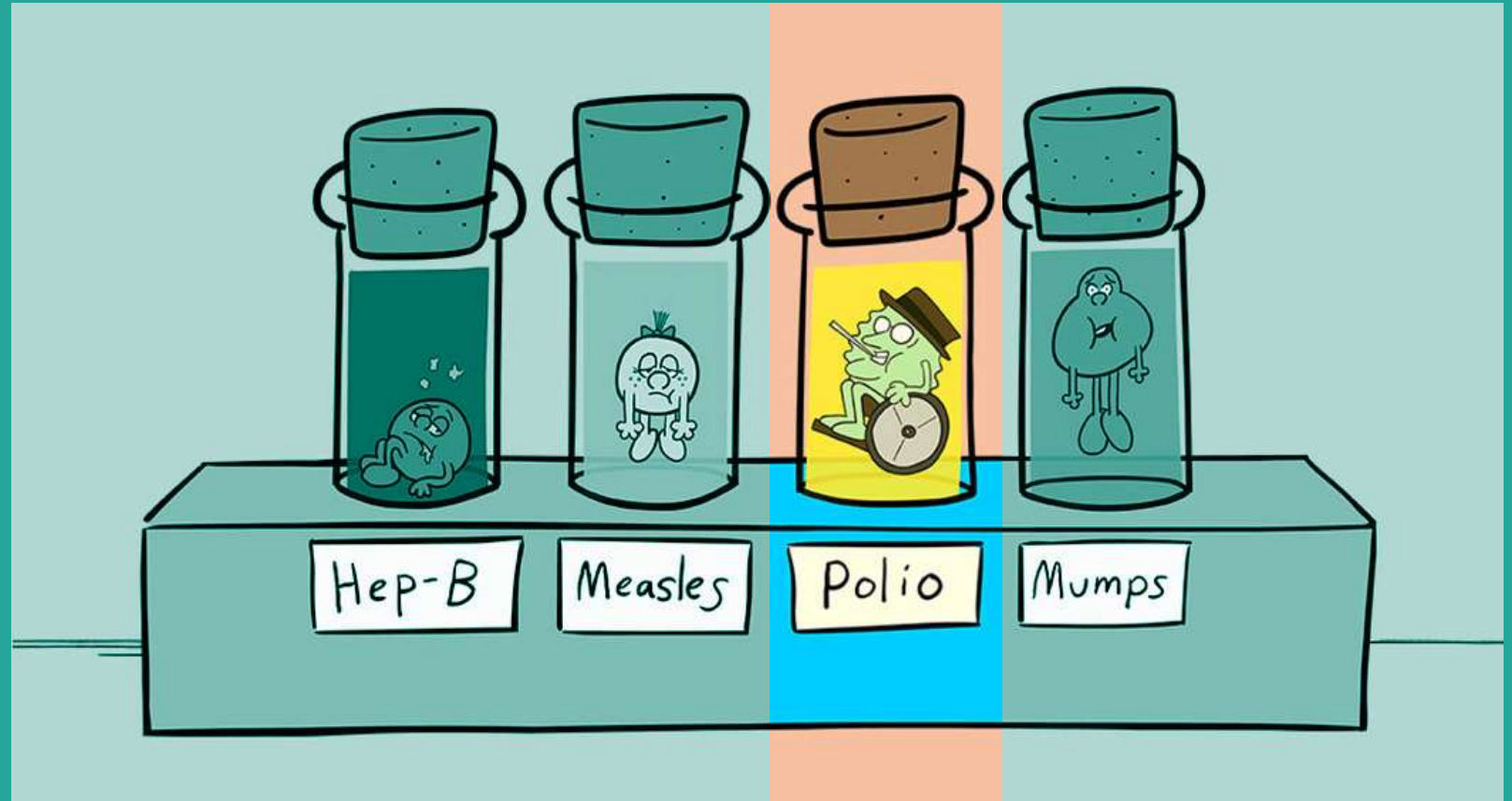


Polio



By Brooke Lindsey

YouLearn Educational Series

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What is Polio?

Polio is a highly contagious viral illness that can cause nerve injury leading to paralysis, difficulty breathing and sometimes death.

There is no cure for Polio but can be prevented by vaccination.

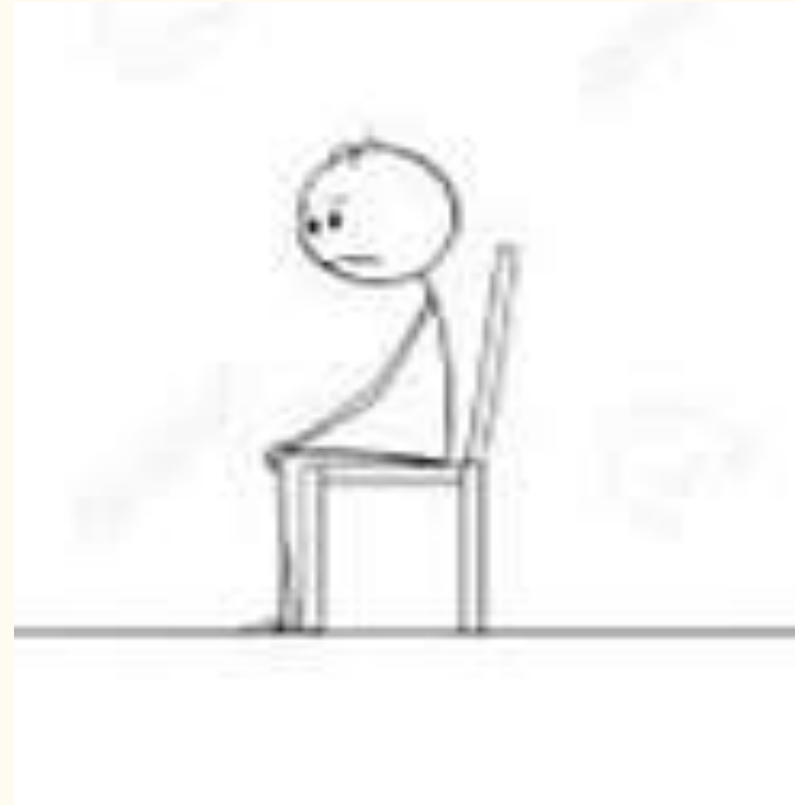


Polio Health Dangers

Polio is a disabling disease that starts in the stomach and moves to the spine.

People who have polio may suffer limb deformity and or paralysis.

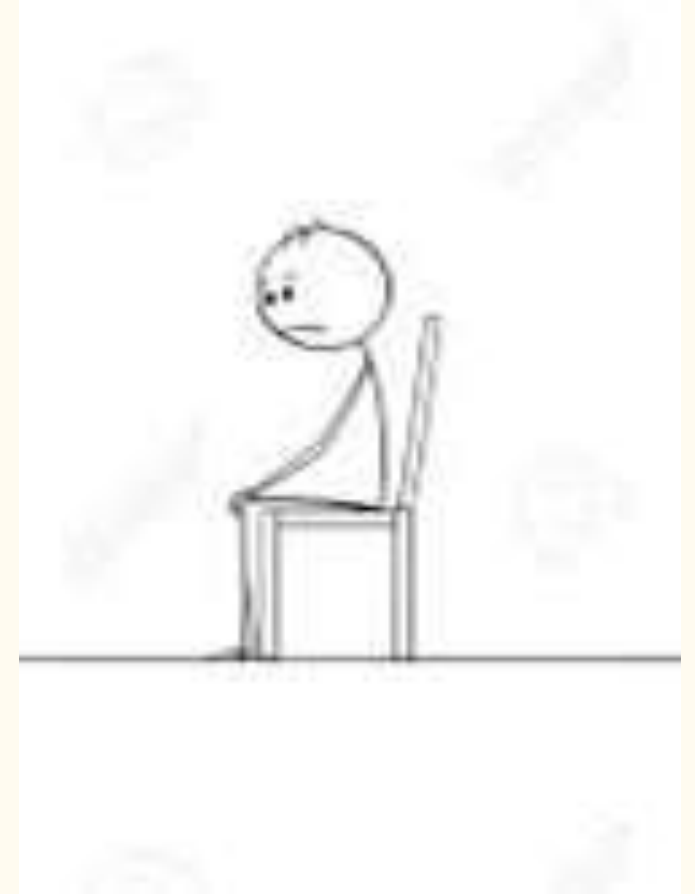
Sometimes, the muscles that are used for breathing, speaking, and swallowing may stop working.



Two Types of Polio

There are two types of Polio:

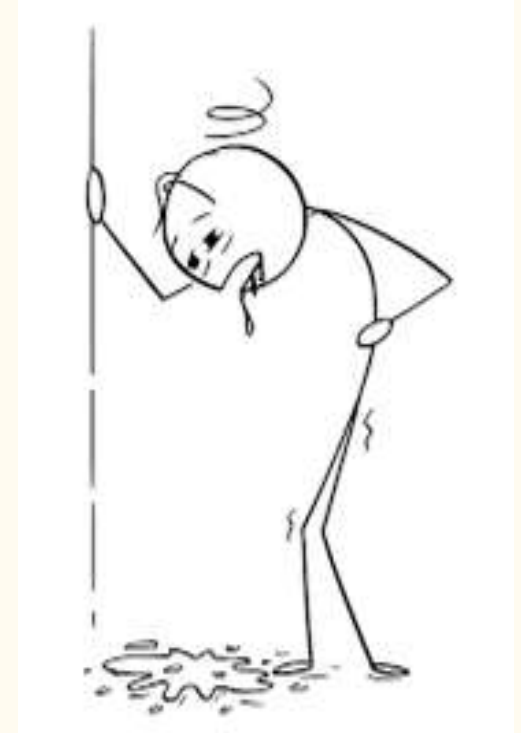
- **Paralytic Polio** - Symptoms worsen within a week to include:
 - Loss of reflexes
 - Severe muscle aches or weakness
 - Loose and floppy limbs (flaccid paralysis)
- **Nonparalytic Polio** - The majority of people who are infected with the polio virus have flu-like symptoms that can last up to 10 days



Symptoms: Paralytic Polio

After being exposed to Polio, you will experience flu like symptoms for several days and then worsen as the virus progresses into your arm and leg muscles. Your legs may weaken and begin to hurt. It may become harder to swallow, speak, and breathe. **These are signs that you should contact your doctor right away.**

If a baby starts to show signs of having polio, they may seem floppy and not move as much.



Symptoms: Non-paralytic polio

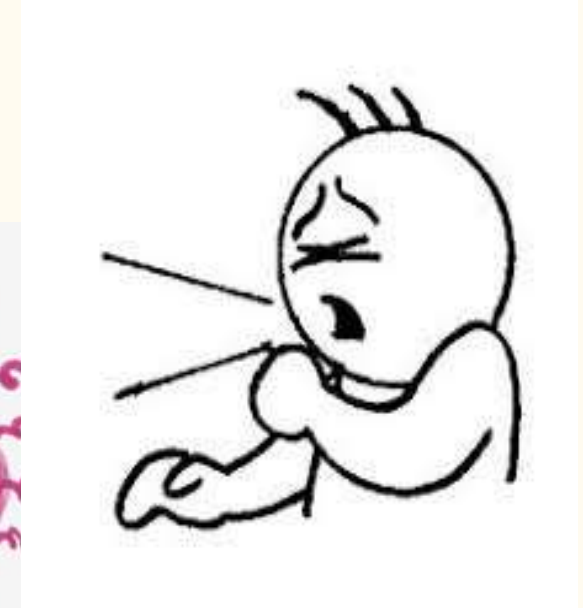
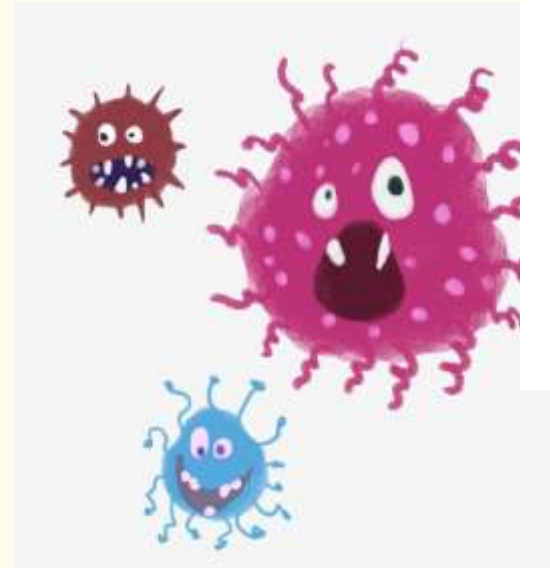
- Fever
- Sore throat
- Headache
- Vomiting
- Fatigue
- Back pain or stiffness
- Neck pain or stiffness
- Pain or stiffness in the arms or legs
- Muscle weakness or tenderness



Causes

Polio spreads by person-to-person contact, such as when an infected person coughs or sneezes. The virus can also spread by touching or eating foods that are contaminated with the virus.

Sometimes a person may not have any symptoms, but can be infectious and spread the virus.



Prevention

The best prevention for polio is to get vaccinated. The vaccine will prevent you from getting sick with polio even if you have been exposed.

If you don't like shots, there is a liquid vaccine that will keep you from getting the disease.



Home Treatment



When trying to get better at home, the most you can do is help the person feel less pain. Pain medication helps reduce pain in their muscles. You could also help them use the bathroom, as that could be something they may not be able to do on their own. Make sure the sick person is taking big, deep breathes in order to get all the air they need!

When it's time to go to the Doctor

If you have been exposed to someone with polio, you develop a fever, your arms and legs begin to feel weak, and you start throwing up, **you need to see a doctor right away.**

If someone close to you became ill with polio, it's a good idea to go to the doctor and be checked just to make sure you have not been infected.

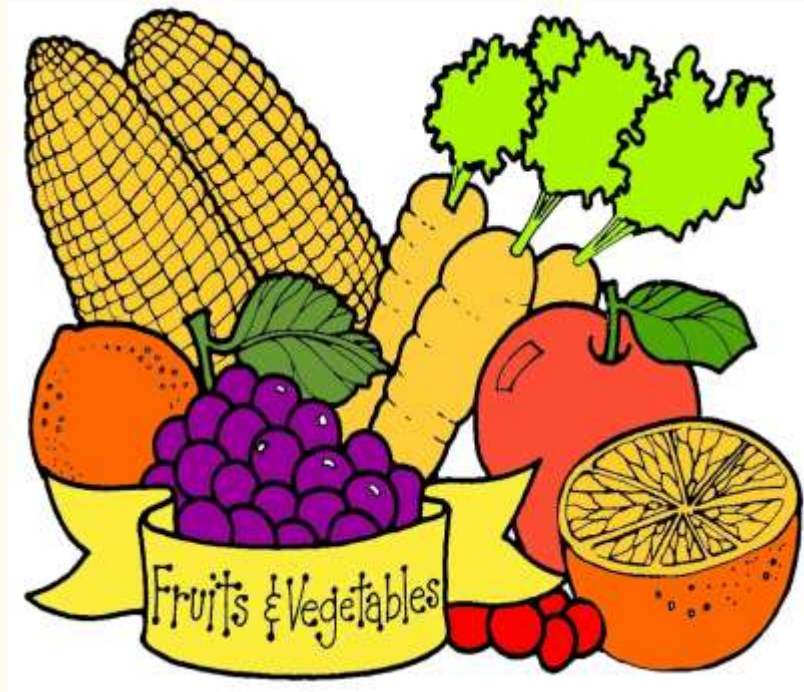


Myths and Misconceptions

- The Polio Vaccine does NOT cause you to get the disease or lose movement in your arms and legs!
- Although it may be scary to get a shot or take a weird pill, the vaccine is better than getting the disease!
- Ask your Health Professional today about Polio Vaccine.



Prevention



It's always important to use clean, safe water for drinking and washing your hands. Wash your fruits and vegetables with clean water before cooking and eating.

Ask your doctor about Polio and find out if you already have been vaccinated. The vaccine will always help protect you from getting Polio.

References

World Health Organization (2017, April). 10 Facts about Polio. Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/features/factfiles/polio/en/>

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