

Poliomyelitis

Agent: Poliovirus

Mode of Transmission: Person-to-person transmission through ingestion of contaminated food or direct contact with fecal material from infected people.

Signs/Symptoms: Up to 90% of all polio infections are asymptomatic. Ten percent will develop into a non-specific syndrome with fever, malaise, headache, nausea, and vomiting. Flaccid paralysis occurs in < 1% of poliovirus infections.

Prevention: Vaccination beginning at 2 months of age.

Other Important Information: Polio eradication programs have led to the elimination of the disease in the Western Hemisphere; however, at the end of 2009, the following four countries still had endemic polio: Afghanistan, India, Nigeria, and Pakistan. In addition, transmission has been re-established in the countries of Angola, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Sudan following the importation of cases to these areas.

The last reported case of poliomyelitis in Virginia occurred in 1978.