

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. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), there were 1,352 cases of polio in 20 countries in 2010. The following four countries still had endemic polio: Afghanistan, India, Nigeria, and Pakistan. Outbreaks were reported from Tajikistan, Central Asia, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Congo (Brazzaville), Angola, and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

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