

Poliovirus Infection, Including 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: Vaccine should be administered beginning at 2 months of age. Four doses of trivalent, inactivated poliovirus vaccine (IPV) are recommended with the last dose administered prior to kindergarten entry.

Other Important Information: Polio eradication programs have led to the elimination of the disease in the Western Hemisphere. Poliovirus transmission has never been interrupted in only three countries, Afghanistan, Nigeria, and Pakistan. Until poliovirus transmission is interrupted in these endemic countries, all countries remain at risk of importation of polio, especially in the “wild poliovirus importation belt” of countries stretching from west Africa to central Africa and the Horn of Africa. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), there were 223 reported cases of polio worldwide in 2012, with Nigeria reporting the most cases. No cases were reported from India, an endemic country prior to 2011. During 2012, re-established poliovirus transmission was interrupted in three of four countries, including Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and South Sudan, while the fourth country, Chad, was making great progress. In 2011, Virginia’s reporting requirements were changed to require reporting of any poliovirus infection, not only poliomyelitis.

No poliovirus infections were reported in Virginia in 2012. The last reported case of poliomyelitis in Virginia occurred in 1978.