Transmission

- Touching the mouth with hands or objects (for example, toys) that are contaminated by the stools of a person infected with polio
- Drinking water or food contaminated by the stools of a person infected with polio

Symptoms

- Starts with fever, tiredness, headache, vomiting, stiffness of the neck or back, or pain or stiffness in the arms or legs.
- Symptoms of “acute flaccid paralysis” or AFP are: sudden loss of reflexes (movement), severe muscle aches or weakness, and loose and floppy arms and legs.
- About one in 200 people with polio is permanently paralysed (unable to move).
- Among those paralysed, up to a tenth (10 per cent) die because the virus affects the muscles that help them breathe.

Prevention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Routine vaccination</th>
<th>Use of appropriate sanitation facilities (sound, clean latrines with proper faecal sludge management)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Handwashing with soap (especially after using the toilet or cleaning a child)</td>
<td>Social mobilization and behaviour change communication</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Vulnerable people

- Children who are not vaccinated are most at risk
- Children living in areas with poor hygiene, sanitation and water infrastructure and services

If an epidemic occurs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Promote mass vaccination campaigns</th>
<th>Promote use of appropriate sanitation facilities (sound, clean latrines that are well maintained and have proper faecal sludge management)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initiate community-based surveillance</td>
<td>Promote safe, clean drinking water (including a clean, covered water container in the household)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rapidly detect and refer suspected cases to health facilities</td>
<td>Increase social mobilization and behaviour change communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase social mobilization and behaviour change communication</td>
<td>Promote handwashing with soap (especially after using the toilet, defecating, or cleaning a child)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Volunteer actions

See the following action tools for more information on how to take action against polio:
Community-based assessment
Make a map of the community and mark the information you gather on the map. Record other details.

- When did the person first experience acute flaccid paralysis (AFP)?
- How many people have experienced acute flaccid paralysis?
- How many people have fallen sick with other polio symptoms? Where?
- Was that person fully vaccinated against polio?
- How many people live in the affected community?
- How many children under 15 years old live in the affected community?
- Are children in the affected community vaccinated for polio (orally or by injectable vaccine)? How many are not?
- Do strong cultural beliefs or perceptions about vaccination prevent children from being vaccinated?
- Who and where are the vulnerable people?
- Are there any health services? Where?
- Have the health services been alerted to a potential polio case?
- Is a vaccination campaign planned?
- Is a social mobilization or health promotion programme in place?
- Which sources of information do people use most?
- Are rumours or misinformation about the disease spreading in the community?