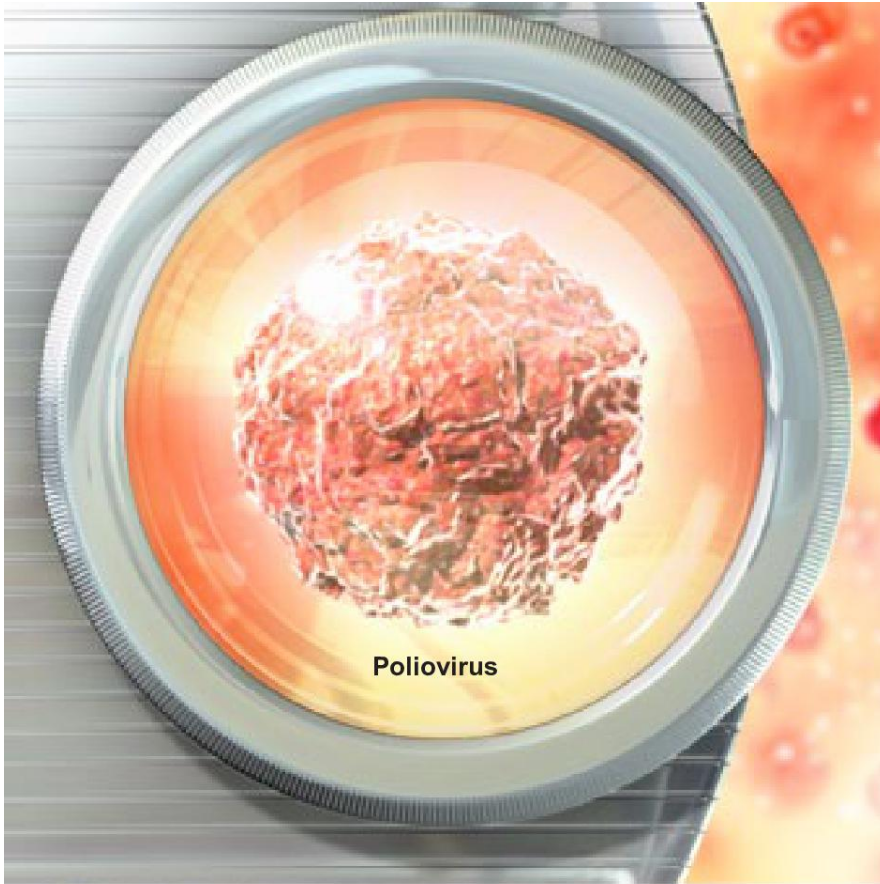




Polio Vaccine



Overview

Poliomyelitis, commonly called polio, is a contagious disease. It is caused by poliovirus. This virus attacks the nervous system. It destroys nerve cells. It can paralyze muscles, including those used to walk or breathe. It can be fatal. There is no cure for polio, but it is prevented with the polio vaccine.

How it Works

The vaccine is made from weakened or inactive versions of the three polioviruses that cause polio. The vaccine causes the body to create antibodies to fight these viruses. Even after the viruses are destroyed, this protection remains.

How it is Given

The vaccine is most commonly given as a series of injections in the leg or the arm. The first dose is given at two months. This is followed by a dose at four months, a dose at 6-18 months, and a booster injection when the child is between the ages of 4-6. There is also an oral version of the polio vaccine. It has not been used in the United States since the year 2000. However, the oral version is still used in many other countries.

Who Should Get the Vaccine

The polio vaccine is recommended for all infants who are at least six weeks old. It is recommended for all children and adolescents. It is also recommended for adults who may be at a risk of coming into contact with poliovirus. This includes people who are planning to travel to countries where polio is not controlled. Certain lab workers and medical workers should get the vaccine. So should certain people who work with children, including day-care workers and people who work at orphanages.

