Polio is a disease caused by a virus. People have feared polio for hundreds of years because it can paralyze arms, legs, and breathing muscles.

Polio virus is spread when invisible particles of feces (poop) get into your mouth. You can get polio by swallowing contaminated food or water or by putting contaminated objects in your mouth.

Yes. Polio can be very serious. Sometimes the infected person’s legs or arms become permanently paralyzed from the virus. Polio can also paralyze the breathing muscles and cause death.

Yes. Polio has been eliminated from the U.S., thanks to vaccination. But the virus is still common in some parts of the world, so your child would be at risk of infection if they traveled to certain countries without being vaccinated. The virus could also be brought into the U.S. by a traveler.

You can protect your child from polio with vaccination. All children should get 3 doses of polio vaccine as babies (starting at 2 months of age) and a booster dose at 4–6 years old.

If your child misses a dose or gets behind schedule, make sure they get the next dose as soon as possible.

For more information, visit www.vaccineinformation.org