

# MINISTRY OF HEALTH



## POLIO FACT SHEET

### What is Polio?

Polio is a viral disease of the nervous system with a tendency to causing sudden weakness of the leg and arm (Paralysis)



### Why is there a threat of polio outbreak in Kenya?

The World Health Organization (WHO) confirmed an outbreak of polio in the Republic of Sudan, Ethiopia, Yemen, Somalia and Eritrea.

The geographical proximity and the close interaction of people in these countries with Kenya, puts Kenya at a risk of importing polio virus.

### How is Polio Spread?

- In areas with poor hygiene and sanitation polio infection spreads through oral faecal contamination.
- Polio also spreads through coughing and sneezing in overcrowded environment.

### **What are the signs and symptoms of Polio?**

- The patient presents with fever, headache, malaise, sore throat and gastrointestinal disturbance lasting 1 or 2 days.
- Weakness of muscles will lead to deformity.

### **How soon after exposure to polio virus do symptoms appear?**

7 – 12 days with a range of 3 – 21 days.

### **Can polio be transmitted from one child to another?**

- Most polio is spread through the stool of non-paralyzed children who have only a cold caused by the polio virus.

### **At what age do children get polio?**

- Polio most often attacks children below 5 years of age
- Polio also tends to strike older children and even young adults up to 15 years.

### **Who does it most often affect?**

- Unvaccinated children much more often than vaccinated children.

### **What are the child's chances of leading a happy, productive life?**

- Usually very good – provided the child is encouraged to do things for himself, to get the most out of school and to learn useful skills within his physical limitations.

### **What is the treatment for polio?**

- No specific drug is available

### **How can polio be prevented?**

- Through immunization where polio vaccine is given routinely to all under fives, starting at birth and then at 6 weeks, 10 weeks and 14 weeks.

It can also be given to school children and even to adults in case of an epidemic.

### **Disease surveillance**

The government has intensified polio surveillance in the whole country, through detecting, reporting and investigating any suspected cases of polio. The public is requested to report to the nearest health facilities or immunization posts any child below 15 years who develops sudden onset of weakness of arms and legs.

**For more information contact:**

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