



## Polio Vaccine Timeline and Milestones

### 1800's

Paralytic poliomyelitis (polio) takes its toll worldwide; affecting mostly children, the disease is known as infantile paralysis.

1894 First known polio epidemic in the United States occurs in Vermont.

### 1900's

1908 Dr. Karl Landsteiner discovers that the cause of infantile paralysis is a virus.

1916 The first major epidemic of polio documented in the United States strikes, paralyzing young children and horrifying the nation.

Increasing numbers of outbreaks occur each year in the United States.

### 1920's

1921 Franklin D. Roosevelt contracts polio at age 39.

1927 Roosevelt organizes the Georgia Warm Springs Foundation for polio patients.

1928 The first iron lung is used to preserve breathing function in patients with acute polio.

### 1930's

1932 Franklin Roosevelt is elected President of the United States.

1938 President Roosevelt founds the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis (NFIP), known today as the March of Dimes, a unique partnership of scientists and volunteers, to conquer polio.

### 1940's

1945 President Roosevelt dies on April 12.

1948 The March of Dimes selects Dr. Jonas Salk to lead research on classifying polio viruses.

## 1950's

- 1952 The worst recorded polio epidemic in U.S. history occurs, with more than 57,800 reported cases.
- 1952-54 Dr. Salk and associates develop a potentially safe injectable polio vaccine (IPV), given to nearly 15,000 Pittsburgh-area subjects (mostly children) in pilot trials.
- 1954 Dr. Thomas Francis, Jr., University of Michigan School of Public Health, is chosen to direct field trials of the Salk vaccine sponsored by the March of Dimes. The trials are the largest in U.S. history, involving 1.8 million children and using the now standard double-blind process for the first time.
- 1954 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine is awarded to John F. Enders, Thomas H. Weller, and Fredrick C. Robbins for developing a tissue culture method for growing polio viruses.
- 1955 On April 12 at the University of Michigan, Dr. Francis announces field trial results: Salk vaccine is "safe, effective and potent." Dr. Francis's Vaccine Evaluation Center becomes the model for future vaccine trials.
- 1955-57 Once vaccine becomes available, incidence of polio in the U.S. falls by 85-90%.

## 1960's

- 1960 March of Dimes establishes The Salk Institute for Biological Studies in La Jolla, CA.
- 1962 Oral polio vaccine developed by Dr. Albert Sabin, with funding by the March of Dimes, is licensed for use in the U.S.
- 1963 Congress establishes the Immunization Grant Program; polio incidence plummets to only 396 reported cases in the U.S.

## 1970's

- 1979 Last reported U.S. case of polio caused by wild poliovirus.

## 1980's

- 1985 Rotary International establishes its PolioPlus program, raising \$247 million to fight polio worldwide.
- 1988 Global Polio Eradication Initiative is launched as polio still affects 350,000 people in 125 countries annually. Spearheading partners include the World Health Organization, Rotary International, U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, and UNICEF.

## 1990's

- 1994 The Americas are certified polio-free.
- 1999 The U.S. Public Health Service recommends that the oral polio vaccine be discontinued in the U.S., and a modified IPV becomes the preferred vaccine.

## 2000's

- 2000 The Western Pacific Region is certified polio-free.
- 2002 The European Region is certified polio-free.
- Rotary International launches a second fundraising campaign to eradicate polio.
- 2005 April 12, 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Salk polio vaccine.
- Efforts to eradicate polio worldwide remain necessary, with just over 1,200 cases globally.

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