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US New York state: Polio case and Circulating Vaccine Derived Polio Virus 2 (cVDPV2) in sewage samples

A reminder of the importance of being up to date with the UK vaccination schedule

In July, Vaccine Derived Polio Virus type 2 (VDPV2) was identified from an unvaccinated resident of Rockland County, who had not travelled outside the US and who presented with acute flaccid paralysis [1]. This is the first case poliovirus in the US since 2013 [2]. Surveillance of wastewater has since identified VDPV2, (in addition to Rockland County), in Orange County, Sullivan County, New York City and Nassau County in New York State [3]. This is a concern as VDPV2 can cause serious illness, such as paralysis, in people who are not fully vaccinated [4].

VDPV2 in New York State has been confirmed as genetically linked to VDPV2 samples [detected in sewage in both London](#) and Israel. Because the virus has persisted in US samples over time and at different sites, it now meets the classification of 'circulating' vaccine derived poliovirus type 2 (cVDPV2) [2].

Advice for travellers

Polio is caused by a virus that spreads easily from person to person. It usually spreads through contact with the faeces of an infected person. For example, from not washing your hands properly and putting them in your mouth, or from contaminated food or water. It can also spread through coughs or sneezes, but this is less common.

The best way to prevent polio is to make sure you are up to date with your vaccinations. Washing your hands with soap and water or using hand sanitiser regularly throughout the day also helps you avoid catching and spreading viruses.

Recommendations for vaccination for travellers to the US have not changed; you should ensure you have completed a primary vaccination course for polio according to the [UK schedule](#) and follow the recommendations for the country you are visiting; [please check on TravelHealthPro Country Information](#).

Local advice should be followed if relevant to individual travel circumstances. [The New York State Department of Health](#) provide information for residents of the State.

Advice for health professionals

All travellers regardless of destination should be up to date with the routine vaccination schedule [recommended in the UK](#).

There is no change to the current vaccination recommendations for visitors to the US. Please see our [Country Information](#) pages for country-specific information.

For specific outbreak information, check our [Outbreak Surveillance](#). The polio status of countries is reviewed by WHO on a regular basis and polio vaccination recommendations are subject to change.

Resources

- [Global Polio Eradication Initiative](#)
- [Global Polio Eradication Initiative. Vaccine-Derived Polioviruses](#)
- [Global Polio Eradication Initiative. Where we work](#)
- [Poliomyelitis factsheet](#)
- [UK Health Security Agency: Polio – guidance, data and analysis](#)
- [World Health Organization: Polio](#)

References

- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Public Health Response to a Case of Paralytic Poliomyelitis in an Unvaccinated Person and Detection of Poliovirus in Wastewater — New York, June–August 2022. August 19 2022;71\(33\);1015-18 \[Accessed 22 September 2022\]](#)
- [World Health Organization. Disease Outbreak News. Detection of circulating vaccine derived polio virus 2 \(cVDPV\) in environmental samples in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America 14 September 2022 \[Accessed 22 September 2022\]](#)
- [NY State Department of Health. Protecting New Yorkers Through Immunization: State Department of Health Updates New Yorkers on Polio In New York State. 9 September 2022. \[Accessed 22 September 2022\]](#)
- [Global Polio Eradication Initiative. Vaccine Derived Polio-Viruses. \[Accessed 22 September 2022\]](#)