

23 Aug 2021

Polio: Public Health Emergency of International Concern

An update on the polio Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC)

The twenty-ninth meeting of the Emergency Committee (EC) under International Health Regulations (IHR) 2005 was convened on 4 August 2021 to review the data on wild polio virus (WPV) and circulating vaccine-derived polioviruses (cVDPV) and progress made towards stopping transmission since the last report (4 May 2021) [1,2].

The statement from the EC, which provides the background to the emergency and detail on the current situation, is available: [Statement of the Twenty-Ninth IHR Emergency Committee Regarding the International Spread of Poliovirus](#).

Countries with a change in status since the last EC meeting are China, Gambia, Malaysia and Uganda.

See polio vaccination recommendations and certificate information on the individual [Country Information](#) pages for those who plan to travel to these countries.

Advice for travellers

You should follow the [latest foreign travel advice](#) for travellers from the United Kingdom.

You can become infected with the [polio](#) virus through contact with the infected human faeces and/or respiratory secretions of an infected person. The virus can also be found in food or water contaminated with infected faeces. You should practise strict [food, water and personal hygiene](#).

Wherever you are travelling to, you should make sure you have completed a primary vaccination course for polio according to the [UK schedule](#). Vaccines used in the UK schedule contain inactivated polio vaccine (IPV) and provide protection against types 1, 2 and 3 polioviruses. The bivalent oral polio vaccine (bOPV) used in some other countries, does not protect against type 2 poliovirus. You should check with your doctor or nurse that you are protected against all types of poliovirus.

You are encouraged to carry documentary evidence of your polio vaccinations. An International Certificate of Vaccination or Prophylaxis is required by some countries. See our [Country Information](#) pages for country-specific information.

Advice for health professionals

All travellers regardless of destination should be up to date with routine vaccination courses and boosters as [recommended in the UK](#). See our [Country Information](#) pages for country-specific recommendations and certificate requirements.

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](#)
- [Public Health England: Polio – guidance, data and analysis](#)
- [World Health Organization: Polio](#)

References

1. [World Health Organization. Statement on the Twenty-ninth IHR Emergency Committee 4 August \[Accessed 23 August 2021\]](#)
2. [World Health Organization. Statement on the Twenty-eighth IHR Emergency Committee 21 May 2021 \[Accessed 23 August 2021\]](#)