

Health Awareness

Surprising News About The Fight Against Polio

(NAPS)—When it comes to combating polio, there's good news, bad news and better news.

The good news is that efforts to eradicate the dreaded disease have been going on for decades. Back in the disease's peak years in the 1940s and 50s, it affected between 13,000 and 20,000 people in the United States each year, many of them children. Thousands died. Many others were permanently paralyzed. Then Jonas Salk and Albert Sabin developed vaccines and the number of cases dropped. As of August 30, 2023, only seven cases of "wild polio virus" (two in Pakistan, five in Afghanistan) have been detected in 2023.

The bad news is that even one case of polio is one too many, and while cases of polio have fallen over 99% worldwide since 1988, a variant of the polio virus is causing outbreaks and consuming critical resources needed to stop the transmission of wild poliovirus. What's more, the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted efforts to combat vaccine-preventable diseases, including polio.

The better news is we know how to eradicate polio. Vaccines are highly effective, and the more people who are vaccinated, the less the virus can spread.

What's Being Done

The Global Polio Eradication Initiative developed tailored strategies to end polio. It offers multi-vaccine campaigns with polio and other vaccines, and increased environmental surveillance sites to quickly detect the virus.

Also, Rotary and its partners are using a new vaccine, nOPV2, to address outbreaks of the variant poliovirus. Millions of doses have been administered.

Who Is Helping

Polio eradication is the flagship priority of Rotary, a global humanitarian organization with more than a million members around the world. These men and women are business, professional, and community leaders with a shared commitment to making the world a better place.

The organization had the audac-



You can join in the efforts of Rotary members and others to wipe polio from the face of the earth.

ity to take on a global effort to protect children everywhere from disability and death due to polio and the tenacity to finish the job and keep its promise to children everywhere.

What You Can Do

You can be part of the effort to end polio in four ways:

1. **Donate** to the End Polio Now Campaign. Donations will be matched 2:1, up to U.S. \$50 million by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

2. **Contact** government leaders and encourage them to prioritize financial and political support for polio eradication.

3. **Participate** in World Polio Day on October 24, 2023, to raise awareness of the importance of polio vaccination and to celebrate the parents, professionals and volunteers who make eradication achievable.

4. **Join** Rotary. Rotary members have contributed over \$2.6 billion dollars and countless volunteer hours to immunize up to 400 million children a year. As a result, more than 20 million people who would otherwise have been paralyzed are walking, and more than 15 million people are alive who would otherwise have died.

Learn More

For further information visit: www.polioeradication.org and www.endpolio.org.