

Our Newest Citizens



NEWEST CITIZEN—John Theodore "Ted" Getsinger, son of Dr. and Mrs. Duncan M. Getsinger of 224 Flemington Road, is shown with his mother. Born on July 30, he bears names taken from both sides of his family. The Getsingers have another child, Kurt, age five.
News Leader Photo

Polio Facts

(The following questions and answers are supplied by the Orange County Chapter of the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis as a public service so that the public may be more fully informed about the Salk Polio vaccine and its usefulness.)

Q. What assurance do we have that the Salk vaccine is safe?

A. Every possible assurance. The report given by Dr. Thomas Francis, Jr., last April showed that the vaccine used in the 1954 field trials neither caused polio nor other major reactions and was 60 percent to 90 percent effective in preventing paralysis due to polio. It was 60 percent to 70 percent effective for Type I virus, about 90 percent for Types II and III. There is reason to believe the Type I part of the vaccine will be more effective this year than last. New and more stringent tests for safety also now are required by the U. S. Public Health Service on every lot of vaccine released for use.

Q. Isn't there a risk to vaccination?

A. There is some statistical risk to every immunizing procedure, to every major and minor operation, to the use of many drugs. The risk in polio vaccination is less than exists in many widely used vaccines and drugs. The benefits far outweigh any risk. So far as polio is concerned, the major risk in the future will be for a child to go through a polio season without protection of the kind vaccination can bestow.

Q. How long does it take for the Salk polio vaccine to protect?

A. Three injections are necessary for full protection. The first shot begins to take effect from seven to 10 days later; at that time, detectable antibodies are present in the blood stream. The second shot, two to four weeks after the first, brings a sharper rise in antibodies. With these two injections, a child should be protected against paralytic polio for the regular polio season. Long-lasting immunization develops only after a third or booster shot seven months to a year later.

Q. Can a vaccinated child become a polio carrier and spread the disease?

A. Yes, but not because he has been vaccinated. Anyone can become a carrier of the disease if the polio virus enters his system. Children who are themselves protected by antibodies induced by the vaccine may be infected by natural exposure to the polio virus and for a brief period excrete the virus, thus exposing their contacts to infection. The vaccine, while protecting those injected against paralysis, does not eliminate the possibility of subsequent infection. Only a very small percentage of those who carry the virus actually become sick from polio.

Q. How long does it take for polio to incubate?

A. From three to 35 days, in general, but most often in the neighborhood of two weeks. When a person is vaccinated, his body begins to develop polio antibodies. If he is vaccinated after he has been infected by the polio virus, however, one cannot expect protection from paralysis.

Q. Does everyone produce antibodies?

A. No, but most people do. Apparently there are some who do not have the power to produce antibodies, and some produce only limited quantities. But relatively few people are in this category.

Q. Are there times when the Salk polio vaccine should not be used?

A. Yes. It should not be given to anyone who is ill at the time, especially if there is fever, sore throat or a gastro-intestinal upset. The vaccine also should not be given to individuals in a household where a case of polio has just been diagnosed, because other members of the family usually carry the virus at this time even though they are not ill. The decision as to using the vaccine rests, of course, with the family physician.

Q. How long does protection given by the vaccine last?

A. There hasn't been enough time since the vaccine was developed to answer this question fully. Youngsters who received the first experimental vaccine in Dr. Salk's research program about two and a half years ago still have protective levels of polio antibodies. The decline in amount of antibodies following the third or booster shot of vaccine, however, is so slow that the vaccine's effectiveness is expected to last for many years. Only time and further investigation can give the complete answer.

Q. Does the first injection of Salk vaccine itself protect against paralytic polio?

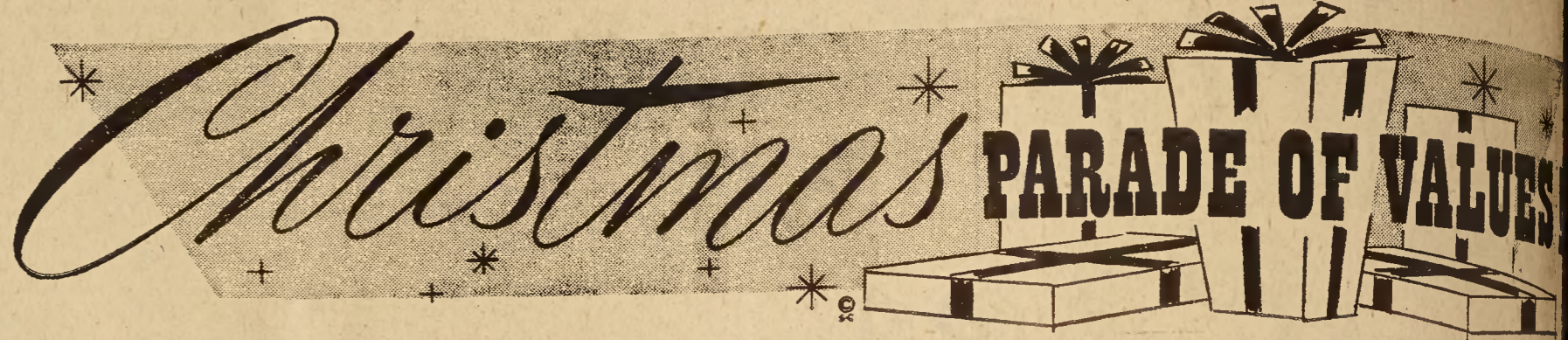
A. It gives some protection, but reliable information does not exist as to the effectiveness of only one shot. One injection sets the machinery in motion for antibody production, reduces a child's chances of developing paralytic polio. Two shots are needed for more adequate protection during the regular polio season—and three for long-term protection.

Q. Should people who have had polio be vaccinated?

A. Yes. There are three types of polio virus and a person who has recovered from infection by one type is not necessarily immune to the other two.

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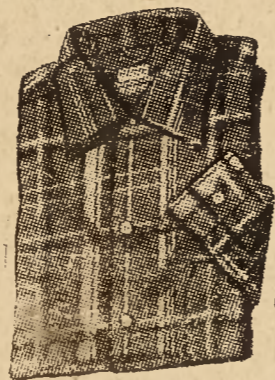


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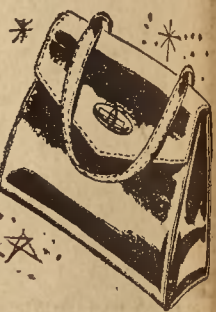
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