

پاکستان
انسداد
پولیو
پروگرام



PAKISTAN
POLIO
ERADICATION
PROGRAMME



Ministry of National Health Services,
Regulations and Coordination,
Government of Pakistan

PAKISTAN POLIO ERADICATION INITIATIVE

WORKING TOWARDS
A POLIO FREE PAKISTAN, FOR EVERY CHILD



WHAT IS POLIO



PAKISTAN AND
AFGHANISTAN



Poliomyelitis (polio) is a highly infectious viral disease that mainly affects young children. It spreads from person to person mainly through the faecal-oral route, or, less frequently, by a common vehicle, such as contaminated water or food. Once the virus enters the body, it multiplies in the intestine, invades the nervous system, and can cause paralysis, or sometimes even death.

Since 1994, the Pakistan Polio Eradication Initiative (PEI) has been working to eradicate poliovirus from the country. The polio eradication programme is driven by 285,000 polio vaccinators working alongside talented epidemiologists and public health experts, supported by the largest disease surveillance network in the Pakistan, quality data collection and analysis, communication activities and state-of-the-art laboratories. Through PEI efforts, polio cases have declined by up to 99%. However, transmission of the poliovirus in Pakistan has increased since 2019.

Pakistan and Afghanistan are the only two countries left where wild poliovirus continues to threaten the health and well-being of young children. This underlines the urgency with which the country must work to eradicate the disease and deliver a polio-free world.

WHO WE ARE

The Pakistan Polio Eradication Initiative is a public-private partnership led by the Government of Pakistan, and supported by the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, which is led by partners including the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Rotary International, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance (Gavi) and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The PEI is organised via Emergency Operations Centres (EOCs), which were created in 2014 at national and provincial levels to serve as coordination structures by which all agencies function together as 'one team under one roof'. This coordination is further strengthened by District Emergency Operations Centres (DEOCs) situated at the district level. At DEOCs, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) and District Health Officer (DHO) of each district manage and lead all aspects of polio vaccination campaign planning and implementation.



STRATEGY FOR POLIO ERADICATION

The National Emergency Action Plan (NEAP) is the annual document that outlines the Polio eradication strategy of the programme, its strategic priorities and main areas of work.

The NEAP contains the main goals of the programme:

- Stopping poliovirus transmission in all remaining polio reservoirs through focused, intensified national efforts and coordinated strategies across international borders.
- Rapidly detecting, containing and eliminating all polioviruses from any newly infected areas.
- Protecting the overall health of populations through maintaining and increasing immunity to poliovirus infection by implementing regular polio campaigns and essential immunization.

WHAT WE DO



Polio campaigns: Throughout the year, the programme implements high quality vaccination campaigns that aim to reach all children under the age of five nationwide with a specific focus on underprivileged communities and priority communities. A total of 285,000 frontline health workers go door-to-door during each campaign to make sure that every child in Pakistan is administered the essential polio vaccine and protected from the poliovirus.



Surveillance: The programme undertakes disease surveillance to track and respond to poliovirus transmission across the country. The methods that the programme uses to identify where the poliovirus is circulating include testing the stool samples of children suffering from acute flaccid paralysis (the symptom of the poliovirus), and testing environmental samples taken from wastewater systems. The environmental surveillance network for polio covers 61 wastewater sites in Pakistan, and is considered to be the largest in the world.



Communications: Local and national level teams carry out advocacy, communication and social mobilization activities to encourage health-seeking behaviours amongst communities focusing on generating greater trust and demand for the polio vaccine. The 'Sehat Tahaffuz' telephone helpline and a dedicated WhatsApp helpline service allow the programme to directly communicate with parents and caregivers. The programme is also striving to build trust and demand for the vaccine through alliances with civil society actors and community leaders.



Also, working with media outlets through the Perception Management Initiative (PMI) to increase national support for the polio eradication goal.



Integrated service delivery: The programme has developed an integrated package of services for communities to address broader community concerns related to a lack of sanitation and clean water in many areas, as well as high rates of malnutrition.



Cross border coordination with Afghanistan: The programme works closely with the Afghanistan polio eradication programme in order to synchronize campaigns and activities across the joint border. It includes share data and coordinate as closely as possible to ensure polio eradication is achieved across the shared epidemiological block.



Collaboration with the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI): The programme works in coordination with EPI to strengthen essential immunization system and build children's immunity against polio and other vaccine-preventable diseases.



WHERE WE WORK

Polio eradication campaigns and activities cover all districts across the nation. Within this, the programme has developed specific strategies for areas that represent the greatest risk of polio transmission. These areas are generally comprised of dense, underserved population groups with poor levels of immunization, and are categorized as 'Super High-Risk Union Councils' (SHRUCs). The programme is committed to ensuring a strong focus on activities and interventions in the SHRUCs, alongside ensuring high quality campaigns and disease surveillance in all districts.

THE REMAINING CHALLENGES

Whilst significant progress has been made since eradication efforts began, today the programme faces several daunting challenges to reach every child with polio vaccine. These challenges include:

- Trust in vaccines leading to vaccine hesitancy, fueled by rumours, misconceptions and anti-vaccine propaganda on social media.
- Significant population movements in Pakistan and across the border with Afghanistan, which have the effect of sustaining polio transmission amongst under-immunized populations.



Steps to address the challenges:

The programme has been taking a range of steps to address community perceptions. In addition to helplines and engagement with local communities, the programme proactively engages with religious leaders, local and social media influencers, celebrities and media personnel to promote vaccination based on scientific facts, and counter anti-vaccine propaganda.

Provision of vaccination services at border crossings, as well as closer coordination between the Afghanistan and Pakistan programmes, helps to ensure that children on the move are vaccinated.

The programme is also strengthening surveillance outreach, data management and its analytics capacity, as well as campaign operations and coverage. This work is critical to ensure that vaccination campaigns are comprehensive and of high quality, and that poliovirus is detected and responded to quickly.

Overall, the concerted efforts to overcome the challenges facing the programme indicate that, despite setbacks, the goal remains in sight – to save the children from this crippling disease for ever.



پاکستان
انسداد
پولیو
پروگرام



PAKISTAN
POLIO
ERADICATION
PROGRAMME



**TWO DROPS, EVERY TIME,
FOR EVERY CHILD**



 www.endpolio.com.pk

 facebook.com/polioeradicationinitiative

 [@PakFightsPolio](https://twitter.com/PakFightsPolio)

 [@pakfightspolio](https://www.instagram.com/pakfightspolio)

 +92 346 7776546

 [PakFightsPolio](https://www.youtube.com/PakFightsPolio)