

# Key facts about poliomyelitis



■ **Poliomyelitis:** Polio is a viral disease of brain and spinal cord that can cause irreversible paralysis in a matter of hours. Polio mainly affects children aged under five

■ **Treatment:** There is no cure for polio, it can only be prevented. Polio vaccine – oral or injected – can protect a child for life

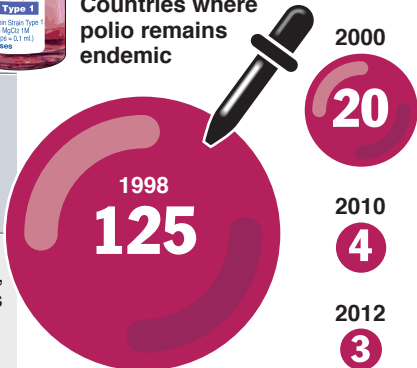
■ **The virus:** There are three strains of wild poliovirus, none of which can survive for long periods outside a human body. If virus cannot find an unvaccinated person to infect, it will die out

■ **Symptoms:** Fever, fatigue, headache, vomiting, stiffness in neck, and limb pain. **One in 200 infections leads to irreversible paralysis.** Among those paralysed, up to 10% die when their breathing muscles become immobilised



■ **Eradication:** Polio cases have decreased by over 99% since 1988, when there were an estimated 350,000 cases worldwide. Polio is now endemic in only three countries – Nigeria, Afghanistan and Pakistan

**Countries where polio remains endemic**



Source: Global Polio Eradication Initiative

Picture: Getty Images

© GRAPHIC NEWS