

Orthotics

Orthotics are artificial devices, such as splints and braces. Orthotic prescriptions can play a really important role in the clinical care of patients with Late Effects and PPS and can be employed to reduce pain, aid mobility, improve energy efficiency, stabilise and protect joints and help maintain levels of independence.

Speech and Language Therapy

Polio survivors who have new or progressive swallowing and/or voice difficulties should be referred to their local Speech & Language service for appropriate evaluation, treatment and follow-up.

Pharmacology

Some drugs may aggravate symptoms and should be applied with care. Caution should be observed with opiates, as they can cause respiratory depression. Also, smaller doses of anaesthetic agents and muscle relaxants are required, than in the general population.

Energy Management

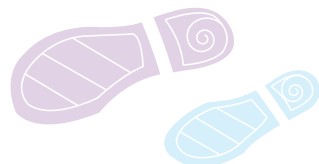
It is important to strike the right balance between rest and activity. A continual cycle of over activity and exhaustion can leave the body in poor shape over time. Pacing lengthens the time taken to complete an activity or exercise but avoids over exertion and pro-longed periods of rehabilitation. Additionally the use of aids and appliances can assist individuals in energy conservation. Advice from occupational therapists, physiotherapists and orthotists will be highly beneficial.

Further Information

Polio survivors are encouraged to join the charity Polio Survivors Ireland and avail of the supports and services which can help them to maintain their independence. As well as practical help, we can provide a listening ear.

Polio survivors are also encouraged to sign our National Polio Register to help create strength in numbers. With more evidence of the need, we can advocate for improved and tailored services and supports for polio survivors.

When polio survivors join the register, it gives us the opportunity to advise those who need information about the services and supports available from the statutory services, as well as from Polio Survivors Ireland.



**Polio Survivors Ireland,
Coleraine House, Coleraine Street,
Dublin 7, D07 E8XF.**

**Call: 01 889 89 20
Email us: info@polio.ie
Visit our website: www.polio.ie**

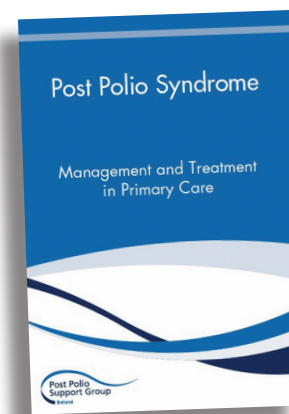
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Post Polio Syndrome

Post Polio Syndrome (PPS) is a progressive neurological condition that can occur decades after an individual initially had polio. About 40-60% of polio survivors will develop PPS and will likely require tailored supports and services to maintain their independence and quality of life. Through understanding each individual's symptoms and assessing their needs, the impact of PPS can be greatly reduced.

About the Blue Book

Polio Survivors Ireland's 'Blue Book' gives a valuable and detailed insight into the Management and Treatment of Post Polio Syndrome in Primary Care. This publication gives a practical approach to the fundamentals of providing relief and support to polio survivors.



To obtain a copy please contact our office,
01 889 89 20
or info@polio.ie or
www.polio.ie



Late Effects of Polio

A brief guide for health professionals on the residual effects of polio, plus the neurological condition Post Polio Syndrome (PPS)



**Contact: 01 889 89 20
info@polio.ie
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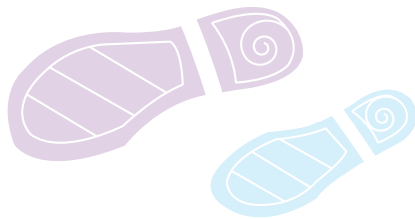
What is Polio?

Polio is a virus which causes fever, vomiting and muscle stiffness. If the nerves are affected it can cause permanent paralysis - that is, the loss of use of muscles. Polio can also paralyse the breathing and swallowing muscles, leading to death.

Impact of Polio

The severity of disability caused by polio varies greatly from person to person. It can vary from almost imperceptible muscle weakness to significant weakness, leading to reduced mobility; as well as from no bulbar problems to intermittent dependence on assisted respiration.

Widespread use of vaccines mean that it is rare in the developed world. In Ireland, there are approximately 5,000 survivors of polio living with the impact of this disease, who are now ageing and have specific needs.



Patients may have had polio very young and information about their treatment and rehabilitation may be anecdotal. Some survivors of polio develop new symptoms after many decades of stable functioning. Therefore it is vital to assess what, if any, new symptoms they are experiencing.

What is Post Polio Syndrome (PPS)?

PPS is a **neurological** condition resulting in new symptoms in people who had polio years earlier, but whose condition has been stable for at least 15 years. PPS can occur from 20 to 40 years after the initial illness, bringing new muscle weakness as the main symptom.

For many survivors, the idea that 'polio has returned' also brings emotional distress and in some cases denial, until they are at crisis point and need urgent support.

There is no laboratory test to diagnose PPS, therefore all other causes of the symptoms must be excluded. Careful clinical evaluation, using history, observation and examination, must eliminate other diseases or causes, such as natural effects of ageing, bone or joint problems due to wear and tear, other neurological or medical disease such as hypothyroidism. Referral to a consultant neurologist is essential for confirmation of diagnosis and exclusion of other disorders.

Symptoms may include:

- New muscle weakness
- Fatigue
- Muscle and joint pain
- Atrophy of muscle
- New difficulties in activities of daily living, particularly mobility related activities
- Cold intolerance
- Sleep impairment
- Speech difficulties
- Dysphagia (difficulty swallowing)
- Respiratory dysfunction

Management & Intervention

There is no medical or pharmacological treatment for PPS, but many ways of managing polio-related difficulties. Management and intervention should be symptom specific and involve a multidisciplinary team, which may include:

- neurology
- physiotherapy
- occupational therapy
- speech & language therapy
- respiratory medicine
- chiropody/podiatry
- counselling
- psychology
- dietetics
- pain specialists
- social workers
- nurse specialists
- orthotists

Muscle weakness, fatigue and pain are the three symptoms that will need evaluation, treatment and monitoring.

What are the residual or Late Effects of Polio?

Many polio survivors who have disabilities as a result of polio as a child, are likely to have what are called residual or Late Effects of Polio. They may not necessarily develop Post Polio Syndrome. The main difference is that they do not develop a significant degree of new weakness, though they may have other issues as a result of walking a specific way, wear and tear on joints or over-compensation.

Issues might include:

- arthritic changes in joints
- pain
- osteoporosis
- fatigue
- sensitivity to the cold
- decline in enjoyment of everyday activities

Help available

Physiotherapy

Patients with Late Effects of Polio or Post Polio Syndrome (PPS) should have access to regular physiotherapy assessment, and treatment should be made available when needs are identified. Areas of assessment will cover neurological, musculoskeletal and cardiorespiratory. Some areas of intervention may include management of new weakness through tailored exercise programmes, management of pain through postural and gait re-education, hydrotherapy and cardiorespiratory management.



Occupational Therapy (OT)

Everyday activities such as daily living, work activities and leisure may all be impacted by Late Effects or PPS, resulting in a deterioration of the wellbeing of the polio survivor. OTs help people to modify their lifestyles in order to continue to perform activities that are most valued to them. They will address your physical, environmental and occupational needs. Through assessment the OT will be able to suggest equipment and new ways of carrying out activities which will help maintain your independence.