

# Polio

Polio is a dreadful disease. Before the vaccine was released about 1955, polio was a well known and greatly feared disease. Even the president of the United States, FDR, was struck by it. Polio would give severe fever, chills and headache, i.e. summer flu like symptoms. Not everyone would develop the life threatening paralytic forms of it. Doctors who did their training in the days before polio vaccine have horror stories to tell of children in iron lungs and those who survived paralysis. Polio used to affect pregnant women, and there were special maternity areas in some urban hospitals to accommodate the paralyzed women. Many people think that polio is a thing of the past. Its incidence has declined because of world wide vaccination campaigns. There are some 'anti-vaccine' people who feel comfortable with their children being unvaccinated against polio. However, there are few people with a medical background who would want their children using a bathroom in an international airport without having had polio vaccine.

## Case History of Polio

---

Carole R, raised in the Lower East Side of NYC. In 1950, at age 5, she came down with polio. She survived but was paralyzed from the neck down with some residual strength of the hand/wrist. As part of a large extended family, and with the help of an electric wheelchair, she completed college, went on to graduate school and became a social worker on behalf of the disabled.