



POLIO case diagnosed in traveller from Pakistan

A recently diagnosed case of polio in a returned student from Pakistan highlights the need for all travellers to make sure their routine immunisations are current.

According to news reports, a 22 year old student living in Melbourne was admitted to hospital with fever, vomiting and muscles aches and pains consistent with a possible viral infection. He had returned from Pakistan on July 2nd. Wild type poliovirus (WPV) has been isolated. Potential contacts of the individual are now being sought. The last case of wild type poliovirus in Australia was reported in 1986 and the Western Pacific Region has been declared free of polio since 2000. This is a significant public health concern and every effort is being made to reduce the risk of further cases. At this stage this case is being viewed as an "imported case" of wild poliovirus.

Pakistan is one of 4 remaining countries considered endemic for the wild poliovirus. Types 1 and 3 have been reported in the last couple of years. Afghanistan, India and Nigeria are also reporting cases of the wild disease. Imported cases continue to be reported in a number of other countries.

POLIOMYELITIS is a viral infection which enters via the gut (orally) and can involve the central nervous system having spread through the blood. There are 3 polio virus serotypes (1,2,3). Most infections are without symptoms but in some cases serious illness and paralysis can occur.

The disease was previously a major cause of disability but in the last 20 years there has been a significant reduction in the number of global cases. Many areas are now declared polio free.

Visit Globe's Interactive Travel Planner <http://www.globemedical.com.au/travelplanner/index.php> for more information on polio and recommended vaccinations for destinations around the world. Remember to always check your routine immunisations are current.