

Are falls a problem?

Falls are particularly common. Polio affected limbs are often osteoporotic. Slippery and uneven surfaces can be hazardous. Caution should be taken on uneven surfaces, such as pavers, gravel and stairs. A fall can immobilise someone with the late effects of polio syndrome for a long time as healing can be slow.

Medication

People with the late effects of polio have greater sensitivity to pain and often require more medication to achieve relief.

Many drug trials have been conducted for the effectiveness on fatigue and pain caused by the late effects of polio. Immunoglobulin has been found to be encouraging but more studies need to be completed to further investigate this drug. Unfortunately no drugs to date have showed a real promise in helping these symptoms.

Services/Contacts

Polio SA offers hydrotherapy group classes at two locations. Contact Polio SA, 0466 893 402 for more details.

- RSB pool, 11 Blacks Road Gilles Plains SA 5086 (just behind the independent living centre)
- Balyana Pool, 46 Strathcona Ave, Clapham, SA 5062 Australia

The Late Effects of Polio - Information for General Practitioners:

http://www.health.qld.gov.au/polio/images/download_manual.pdf

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THE LATE EFFECTS OF POLIO



**Polio SA Inc.
302 South Road
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**The post polio
support group for
South Australians**

Office Phone Number: 0466 893 402

What are the late effects of polio?

The late effects of polio may develop 20-30 years after a person has contracted the Polio virus. Polio is a virus which affects the junction between muscles and nerves. During the recovery phase, nerves regrow and motor function returns. Although the cause is unknown, the most popular hypothesis that explains this is that the previously effected motor units become overused.

What are the symptoms?

The late effects of polio may present as;

Unusual fatigue, may be generalised fatigue (feeling total exhaustion) or muscle fatigue (rapid tiring of the muscles during exercise but improves with rest).

Muscle weakness, may include muscles originally affected by polio virus, as well as muscles unaffected at the time.

Pain in muscles and/or joints.

Breathing and swallowing difficulties.

Management

Management of the late effects of polio is varied depending on what symptoms a person experiences. Some of the most successful strategies are;

- Lifestyle modification
- Decreasing the total daily energy output.
- The use of mobility aids such as sticks and braces.

Fatigue

Fatigue is common with the late effects of polio. Management strategies for fatigue are;

- **Sub maximal** exercise programs (a neuro physiotherapist can assist)
- **Sleep analysis** as sleep apnea and hypoventilation are common.
- **Medication**, with side effects of drowsiness/fatigue, can be taken at night before going to bed

Are surgery and anaesthesia safe?

People with the late effects of polio may have a weakened respiratory system and therefore may be at greater risk of complications during and after surgery.

It is important that all members of the surgical team are aware if you have been diagnosed with post polio syndrome or are experiencing the late effects of polio.

It is especially the anaesthetist to be aware as a **lesser dose of anaesthetic** may be required.

If everyone is aware of the patient's condition **surgery is a safe** option.

People experiencing the late effects of polio also have a slower rate of healing and therefore a longer recovery period should be planned for.