

## **A Personal Story of Polio**

I contracted polio at seven years in 1951 with paralysis on my left side. It was a frightening time as children died and were crippled. We were discouraged from speaking about polio and urged to throw away assistive devices so we could look as "normal" as possible.

Thirty- five years after polio I was diagnosed with Post Polio Syndrome! It is the result of failing motor neurons that had to bear more than 500 times their normal load since polio but can no longer do so. Post polio may cause a decline of muscles, the ability to walk, intolerance to cold, impaired breathing, lack of endurance and reactions to anaesthetics and medicines.

No one knows how or when or with what severity Post Polio will affect each person. Travel and retirement plans may need to be altered. I have had a series of operations so I can continue to walk. I have learned that assistive devices are beneficial as they allow me to be more mobile. I joined a post polio group for information, support and fellowship. I had polio but my husband and I have post polio because it has changed his life and plans so much too.

The polio vaccine was not available to me as a child but immunization is now available and I urge everyone, young and old, to make certain they are protected from the terrible consequences of polio and post polio syndrome.

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For further information on polio:

[www.ppass.bc.ca](http://www.ppass.bc.ca)

[www.poliocanada.com](http://www.poliocanada.com)

[www.post-polio.org](http://www.post-polio.org)

[www.immunize.cpha.ca](http://www.immunize.cpha.ca)