

Remembering Dr. Jonas Salk, creator of the polio vaccine

By ACSH Staff — October 28, 2014



Today, October 28th, marks the 100th birthday of Jonas Salk, the

man who invented the polio vaccine. As Michael Cavanaugh [says in his article](#) ^[1] in the *Washington Post*, this vaccine was the substance of a profoundly life-altering reality. Salk began his journey at the NYU School of Medicine, eventually moving to the University of Pittsburgh, where he was the head of the School of Medicine's Virus Research Laboratory. While there, he developed the vaccine using a deactivated polio virus which would be injected to stimulate anti-poliovirus antibodies and thereby trigger the body's defenses against the virus.

The vaccine was officially declared effective and safe on April 12, 1955. And according to the Salk Institute, in the two years before [the] vaccine was widely available the average number of polio cases in the U.S. was more than 45,000. By 1962, that number had dropped to 910.

Following the invention of the vaccine, Salk founded his biological studies center in LaJolla, California (near San Diego) and took on research centering on cancer immunology, multiple sclerosis, autoimmune diseases and developing an AIDS vaccine. He died at the age of 80 on June 23, 1995 but his legacy will not be forgotten.

ACSH's Ariel Savransky adds, It is so important to remember the accomplishments of Dr. Salk, especially today when we are surrounded by anti-vaccine hysteria and parents are choosing not to vaccinate their children. In honor of Jonas Salk, as we've said many times before, we urge the public to stop listening to the ideas being promoted by the anti-vaccine movement and do what is best for their own and their family's health as well as for public health which is to get vaccinated.

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[1] <http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/comic-riffs/wp/2014/10/28/jonas-salk-google-says-thanks-to-the-heroic-polio-vaccine-developer-with-birthday-doodle/>