

TELEVISION SCRIPT OF SENATOR STROM THURMOND FOR FOUR-MINUTE FILM
ON INFANTILE PARALYSIS, MAY 9, 1957.

During the past few days, I have had occasion to discuss the polio vaccination situation in South Carolina with representatives of the National Foundation For Infantile Paralysis and the Surgeon General of the United States. What I have learned from these gentlemen gratifies me, but at the same time causes me some concern.

I am pleased to see that more than 55 per cent of all persons under 20 in the State of South Carolina have received one or more inoculations with the salk anti-polio vaccine. I know that these people have taken steps to protect themselves from paralytic polio well in advance of the season when that disease is most prevalent.

But these same figures are also partly the cause of some concern. They say that more than 40 per cent of our people have not taken even the small amount of time necessary to begin the series of inoculations -- shots which could mean the difference between health and disablement.

Unfortunately, the greatest number of those still unprotected are in the groups that need protection the most -- the pre-school children from one to six years old, and the teen-agers. These youngsters need protection the most because more than three quarters of all polio patients today are under 20 years of age.

Parents certainly should be vitally concerned with getting their children vaccinated, but they should not forget about themselves. Polio strikes heavily at the 20 to 40 age group --

even more heavily at pregnant women. More than 25 per cent of all polio cases now occur among young adults and when these young people are parents and wage earners, polio becomes not only a bodycrippler but an economiccrippler as well.

In the past, the coming of the summer months often meant that polio would soon be striking epidemic blows at the children and young adults of our State and nation. Once there was virtually nothing we could do to stem the polio tide. This is not true today.

The Salk vaccine -- tested in the greatest mass field trial in medical history -- has already been used by more than 60 million Americans. It has proven to be safe, potent and effective.

The dramatic effectiveness of the Salk vaccine in preventing polio is evident from a comparison of reported polio cases in the last two years. The figures show that reported polio cases in 1956 dropped 47 per cent as compared with 1955.

Right now, your family doctor is cooperating with State and county health officers to assure that all of our citizens receive the protection of the Salk vaccine before the polio season begins. The U. S. Public Health Service reports that there will soon be enough vaccine in South Carolina for the inoculation of all persons up to age 40. The responsibility now rests with you, the public, to join in this effort, to do your indispensable part to see the program through.

It takes about three minutes to get the entire series of Salk vaccine -- 60 seconds for each inoculation. Three minutes is very little time when compared to years in an iron lung or a wheel chair.

I hope that the example given by the thousands of our already vaccinated citizens will encourage the rest of you to take this readily available protection.

I can only add my voice to that of the President of the United States, the Surgeon General, and your doctor, in urging that you and your children make use of the vaccine soon -- if you haven't done so already.

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