**Polio Vaccination Update**

**Replacing trivalent OPV with bivalent OPV: a critical step in polio eradication**

One of the objectives of the Polio Eradication and Endgame Strategic Plan 2013-2018 calls for an important transition in the vaccines used to eradicate polio, and requires the removal of all oral polio vaccines (OPVs) in the long term to eliminate the rare risks of vaccine-associated paralytic polio (VAPP) and circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus (cVDPV).

This will be carried out in phases, beginning with “the switch”, where trivalent OPV (tOPV, containing weakened poliovirus types 1, 2, and 3) will be replaced by bivalent OPV (bOPV, containing weakened poliovirus types 1 and 3 only), removing the type 2 component.

The withdrawal of OPVs must occur in a nationally synchronised manner, starting on April 26, 2016.

**Health workers should not, under any circumstances, immunise children with tOPV on or after April 26, 2016.**

Preparation for the removal of OPVs also includes the introduction of at least one dose of inactivated polio vaccine (IPV) into routine immunisation programmes in all countries.

In this regard, the new immunisation schedule is as follows:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **1ST DOSE** | **2ND DOSE** | **3RD DOSE** | **1ST BOOSTER** |
| IPV | OPV | OPV | OPV |
| 2 months | 4 months | 6 months | 18 months |

For further information, please contact the Expanded Programme on Immunisation Division at 627-9085 or 624-4994, or visit the Ministry of Health’s website ([www.health.gov.tt](http://www.health.gov.tt)).