

5 **VACCINE-PREVENTABLE DISEASES**

a **A global change in the oral poliomyelitis vaccination: the switch from trivalent to bivalent**

A milestone in the progress towards poliovirus elimination will be achieved during the last two weeks of April 2016. Worldwide, poliovirus type 2 has been removed from the oral polio vaccine (OPV), which is a live attenuated vaccine. This is due to type 2 poliovirus being declared eradicated from the planet in September 2015. Vaccination against type 2 poliovirus will be done through the type 2 component of the inactivated polio vaccine (IPV) which was included in the Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI) schedule of South Africa since 2009.

The date earmarked for the switch from trivalent OPV (containing types 1, 2 and 3) to bivalent OPV (only containing types 1 and 3) is 20 April 2016. Throughout the country all trivalent OPV was removed from health facility fridges, depots and distribution points, and bivalent OPV replaced it. No trivalent OPV should be in use from 20 April 2016. The National Department of Health (NDoH), the National Task Force (NTF) for polio containment and National Certification Committee (NCC) for polio eradication are involved in conducting, monitoring and validating the vaccine switch. The Centre

for Vaccines and Immunology at NICD, specifically staff members of the polio isolation and polio molecular laboratories are providing technical expertise to these bodies.

Certain sites of OPV use will be selected by the NTF and visited to ensure the switch has proceeded as planned. These will include all national and provincial depots and distribution warehouses, as well as a select number of health facilities that use OPV. Once removed from the cold chain, all trivalent OPV, will be destroyed over the next 3 months, and will no longer be produced. This event mark the beginning of the final endgame of poliovirus eradication from all areas of the globe, envisioned by the World Health Organization (WHO) and its partners. since the 1990's.

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