

POLIO GLOBAL ERADICATION INITIATIVE NEWS

Dear polio eradication supporter,

April marked World Immunization Week, recognising the efforts around the world to reach children with vaccines that save 2 to 3 million deaths every year. As well as celebrating the fact that we are closer than ever to achieving our target of a world free of polio, the long anticipated oral polio vaccine switch began in over 155 countries and territories. This critical step is a sign of significant progress made toward eradication and takes us even closer to achieving our goal. The vaccine switch was also discussed at length during the April meeting of the Strategic Advisory Group of Experts on immunization (SAGE) in Geneva.

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THE ORAL POLIO VACCINE SWITCH

Between 17 April and 1 May 2016, 155 countries and territories around the world switched from using the trivalent oral polio vaccine (tOPV), which protects against all three strains of poliovirus, to bivalent OPV (bOPV), which protects against the two remaining strains of wild polio (types 1 and 3). The switch marks the largest and fastest globally coordinated project in the history of vaccines, and aims to eliminate the small risk of type 2 vaccine-derived polio viruses.



Watch these [explainer videos](#) to learn about why the switch is such an important part of the polio endgame, and check out this [live map](#) to see the status of the vaccine switch around the world.

With wild poliovirus type 2 eradicated, the type two component of the oral polio vaccine is being withdrawn from use a step forward towards eradication. ©UNICEF/India

WORLD IMMUNIZATION WEEK: CLOSING THE IMMUNIZATION GAP

In April, we celebrated World Immunization Week 2016 with the theme “Close the Immunization Gap.” Every year, vaccines prevent illness and disability from vaccine-preventable diseases, including polio, and avert an estimated 2 to 3 million deaths. Yet, in 2014, an estimated 18.7 million infants worldwide were not reached with routine immunization, leaving many unprotected. Polio eradication was one of the focus areas for the week on Wednesday, 27 April. Additionally, the WHO-AFRO region celebrated African Vaccination Week 2016 with the theme “Close the immunization gap. Stay polio-free!” reminding countries to take steps to protect progress as the world moves closer to eradication and to use the strong polio infrastructure to contribute to other health goals, now and in the future. [\[Read More\]](#)



A world free from polio is one of the six goals of the Global Vaccine Action Plan highlighted this World Immunization Week. © WHO

POLIO IN THE NEWS

Reuters: [Latest battle to wipe out polio begins with vast vaccine switch](#)

Stat News: [‘We have never been this close’: The campaign to eradicate polio takes a giant step forward](#)

National Geographic: [The Entire World is Getting a New Polio Vaccine This Month](#)

Huffington Post: [Every Parent Plays A Part In Protecting Kids From Polio](#)

MICROARRAY PATCH RESEARCH

Researchers have developed an innovative method of administering the inactivated poliovirus vaccine (IPV) that results in greater efficacy with less dosage. Although studies on this method remain in the clinical phase, the nanopatch is a promising health innovation that could in the future serve as an alternative to current injectable vaccine methods for not only polio, but other vaccines as well. [\[Read more\]](#)

POLIO IN NUMBERS

Wild poliovirus in 2016

- Global Total: 12 (23) ↓
- Global WPV1: 12 (23) ↓
- Global WPV3: 0 (0)

Endemic: 12 (23) ↓

- Afghanistan: 4 (1) ↑
- Pakistan: 8 (22) ↓

Importation Countries: 0 (0)

Data as of 27 April 2016. Numbers in brackets represent data at this time in 2015.

[Current case map](#)

STRATEGIC ADVISORY GROUP OF EXPERTS ON IMMUNIZATION (SAGE) MEETING

On 12-14 April, the Strategic Advisory Group of Experts on immunization (SAGE) convened in Geneva. During a session dedicated to polio, members of the SAGE reviewed progress toward eradication. The SAGE acknowledged the significant progress made in Afghanistan and Pakistan, as well as the tremendous preparations made for withdrawing trivalent OPV in 155 countries and territories around the globe through the trivalent to bivalent oral polio vaccine switch.



[[Read the SAGE meeting summary](#)]

The trivalent and bivalent oral polio vaccines and the inactivated polio vaccines: the tools that have brought us so far towards a polio-free world. © WHO/C. Lamoureux

PROTECTING CHILDREN IN COUNTRIES VULNERABLE TO POLIO



While there hasn't been a case of polio in the Middle East since 2014, countries like Jordan must continue to conduct vaccination campaigns in order to make sure that the region stays polio-free. The most recent campaign was captured in a [photo series](#) documenting the work these teams have undertaken to ensure every child in Jordan is reached with vaccines.

An 11-day old baby gets his finger marked after receiving OPV. © WHO/J. Swan

every last child

ORGANISATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION

The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation held its 13th Islamic Summit of the Heads of State and Government this month in Istanbul. The Final Communique released after the meeting reaffirmed the importance of polio eradication and appealed to religious scholars and leaders to support the polio eradication campaign. Read the [Final Communique](#).

FUNDING UPDATES

On 4 April, **Canada's** Minister of International Development and La Francophonie [announced new funding](#) to help stop polio transmission in Pakistan. Canada will contribute C\$40 million over three years to WHO and UNICEF as part of its Vaccine Summit commitment. [More](#)

The **Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation** provided US\$ 17.7 million for WHO to support the Pakistan programme.

Germany released €10 million to WHO and UNICEF as part of its €105 million commitment for polio eradication announced at the Vaccine Summit in 2013.

