

SWITCH FROM T-OPV TO B-OPV

Preparing for the withdrawal of all oral polio vaccines (OPVs):

Replacing trivalent OPV with bivalent OPV in “the switch”

1. What is the switch?

Introduction

In the last two decades, immunization programmes have reduced the number of polio cases globally by more than 99%. Of the three poliovirus types, type 2 wild poliovirus (WPV) has already been eradicated. **No type 2 WPV case has been detected anywhere in the world since 1999.**

The Polio Eradication and Endgame Strategic Plan 2013-2018 (the Endgame Plan), requires the removal of all oral polio vaccine (OPVs) in the long term from all OPV-only using countries. 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, with the type 2 component removed).

As preparation for the removal of OPV, at least one dose of the injectable inactivated polio vaccine (IPV) has been introduced into immunization programmes to help mitigate risks and boost immunity before the switch to bOPV.

How will the switch happen?

Synchronized switch

- Globally tOPV will be replaced with bOPV in a 2 week span in April 2016
- **South Africa will switch to from tOPV to bOPV on 20 April 2016**
- There will be no use of tOPV after this period

Synchronization is essential so as to ensure that the type 2 VDPV or VAPP does not occur after the switch date

In order for the switch to take place as planned, the following objectives have to be met:

1. Successful replacement of tOPV with bOPV in routine immunisation in April 2016
2. Successful recall & destruction of tOPV
3. Minimise tOPV wastage related to switch
4. Ensure all children are still immunised (i.e avoid tOPV stock outs before switch date, and bOPV stock outs after switch date)
5. Validation that district is free of tOPV.

How will this take place?

- On **switch** day:
 - You will **stop using tOPV** and only use bOPV instead;
 - **All tOPV** will be **removed from the cold chain** and safely **disposed** of in approved disposal sites.
 - It is **strictly prohibited to immunise children with tOPV** on or after switch day in **any circumstance**, whether it is to finish remaining stocks or because you were not supplied with bOPV.

- Independent **Switch Monitors** will visit selected health structures to verify the **absence** of tOPV stocks. If 2 weeks after The Switch you still have tOPV and/or you were not visited by a Switch Monitor, you must inform your superior for rapid rectification.
- After **4 May 2016**, the national government will make an **official statement** confirming that in compliance with the WHA resolution South Africa is **free of stocks of tOPV**.