

Polio vaccine recommendations for children previously immunized internationally with oral poliovirus vaccine (OPV).

Key Messages:

- Recommendations for children previously immunized internationally with the oral poliovirus vaccine (OPV) have been updated.
- OPV administered on or after April 1, 2016, are considered invalid and an age-appropriate series of IPV or IPV-containing vaccine should be completed.

The OPV update will impact screening and enforcement under the Immunization of School Pupils Act (ISPA) for the 2024-2025 school year.

Update: Polio vaccine recommendations for children previously immunized internationally with oral poliovirus vaccine (OPV).

The Ministry of Health has updated polio vaccine recommendations for children previously immunized internationally with the oral poliovirus vaccine (OPV). These changes align with updated guidance from the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI).

In April 2016, the World Health Organization coordinated a global switch for countries who administer the oral polio vaccine – replacing the trivalent oral polio vaccine (tOPV) with the bivalent OPV (bOPV), which excludes poliovirus serotype 2. Healthcare providers should presume that children vaccinated internationally with documented dose(s) of OPV administered on or after April 1, 2016, received bOPV. To ensure protection against all three poliovirus types, these children should complete a series of polio vaccination with an inactivated polio vaccine (IPV) or an IPV-containing vaccine according to their age-appropriate schedule.

It is important to note that OPV has not been used in Canada since 1996, so this recommendation mainly affects newcomers or those vaccinated outside of Canada.

Healthcare providers are recommended to:

- Review available immunization records.
- Presume that any recorded doses of OPV administered on or after April 1, 2016, are bOPV (lacking polio serotype 2) and consider these doses as invalid.
- Administer an age-appropriate series of IPV or IPV-containing vaccine, which covers all three poliovirus types.

Impacts to screening and enforcement under the Immunization of School Pupils Act (ISPA):

This update may affect vaccination assessments under the Immunization of School Pupils Act (ISPA) and the Child Care and Early Years Act (CCEYA), as some children previously considered up to date for polio may now require re-immunization.

Efforts are underway to update the provincial database (Panorama) to invalidate OPV and unspecified doses of polio administered on or after April 1, 2016.

These changes will come into effect in June 2024 and will impact screening and enforcement under ISPA in the 2024-2025 school year.