

WORLD IMMUNIZATION WEEK

24th - 27th April 2015

The World Immunization Week is organized by the World Health Organization yearly for the past few years. Member states of the WHO conduct certain activities regarding immunization under a specific theme in this week.

Immunization is widely recognized as one of the most successful and cost-effective health interventions. It prevents between 2 to 3 million deaths every year and now protects children not only against diseases for which vaccines have been available for many years, such as diphtheria, tetanus, polio and measles, but also against diseases such as pneumonia and rotavirus diarrhoea, two of the biggest killers of children under 5. Now adolescents and adults can be protected against life-threatening diseases such as influenza, meningitis, and cancers (cervical and liver), thanks to new and sophisticated vaccines.

The World Immunization Week for the year 2015 to be held from 24th-30th April 2015, will signal a renewed global, regional and national effort to accelerate action to increase awareness and demand for immunization by communities, and improve vaccination delivery services. This year's campaign focuses on "closing the immunization gap and reaching equity in immunization levels" as outlined in the Global Vaccine Action Plan, which is a framework to prevent millions of deaths by 2020 through universal access to vaccines for people in all communities.

Ministry of Health together with the Epidemiology unit has identified the following activities during the World Immunization Week. As a part of global Polio eradication, Sri Lanka is planning to introduce the Injectable Polio Vaccine (IPV) from mid-2015. During the World Immunization Week, Epidemiology Unit plans;

- A media briefing to educate media regarding the objectives of introducing the IPV and its benefits towards reaching Polio eradication. This will lead to public awareness.
- To have an awareness programme for all MOOH at district level.
 - ◆ Regarding the changes to National Immunization Program including IPV introduction. This will be carried out by the Regional Epidemiologists under the technical guidance and coordination of the Epidemiology Unit.
 - ◆ Sensitizing the WHO developed new Vaccine Adverse Events Monitoring Information System (VAEMIS) where the routine AEFI data including the IPV, are entered.

Sri Lanka is on its way to achieve the goals in immunization and is further strengthening surveillance system as globally.

