

World Immunization Week 2015

A media briefing to receive advocacy on introduction on Injectable Polio Virus (IPV) introduction as an activity for the World Immunization Week commencing from 24th April to 30th April was organized by the Epidemiology Unit of Ministry of Health on 23rd April, 2015.

The main objective of the briefing was to make aware the introduction of the IPV and its benefits towards reaching Polio eradication. The Director General of Health Services, Country representatives of WHO and UNICEF and many other members of the Ministry of Health participated in the briefing.

In a landmark step to accelerate the global eradication of poliomyelitis and to help prevention of resurgence of poliomyelitis, Sri Lanka is introducing the IPV into its National Expanded Programme on Immunization from July, 2015.

Since 1988, when the Global Polio Eradication Initiative was formed, the global incidence of polio has reduced by more than 99%, and the number of countries with endemic polio transmission has fallen from 125 to three, i.e. Pakistan, Afghanistan and Nigeria. Global plans are underway to eradicate poliomyelitis by 2018. Every polio-free country in the world has eliminated polio through the use of OPV (trivalent OPV, which is a live attenuated vaccine) which gives protection for polio virus type 1, type 2 and type 3.



Sri Lanka is free from Poliomyelitis since 1993 and the South-East Asia Region has declared polio free certification in March, 2014.

In Sri Lanka, IPV will be given at the age of 4 months from July 2015 as another injectable vaccine, with the 2nd vaccination dose of Pentavalent and OPV. The introduction of IPV and the eventual phased withdrawal of OPV globally, are necessary to secure a lasting polio-free world.

This phased withdrawal would begin with the removal of type 2 component of OPV through a switch from trivalent OPV (tOPV) to bivalent OPV (bOPV, containing only types 1 and 3) during the year 2016. Since IPV protects children against all three types of poliovirus, adding at least one dose of IPV into the routine immunization schedule will reduce any risks associated with the withdrawal of type 2-containing OPV.



Media personnel representing various institutions and channels participated in the event and Ministry of Health requested the media colleagues to disseminate this message among public.