



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

ADVISORY
Polio Vaccination for Travelers

Poliomyelitis is a highly contagious viral disease caused by three types of poliovirus (types 1, 2 and 3). The disease can result in irreversible paralysis affecting most commonly the leg muscles but for 5-10% of acute flaccid paralysis cases, the breathing muscles are also affected which can cause death.


The Philippines along with the other members of the Western Pacific Region has been polio-free since 2000. According to the WHO, only Afghanistan and Pakistan remain endemic to wild poliovirus at present. However, since May of 2015 up to January 2016, there were 34 outbreaks of circulating vaccine derived poliovirus (cVDPV) occurred in Ukraine, Madagascar, Lao People's Republic, Myanmar, Nigeria and Guinea. Supplementary immunization activities (SIAs) are being implemented in the above mentioned countries to immediately stop the transmission and international spread of VDPV to other polio-free countries.

The Emergency Committee under the International Health Regulations (IHR) states that the spread of polio is a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) and that it is necessary to take certain actions to interrupt the spread of wild poliovirus.

The DOH hereby recommends the following to those going to Afghanistan, Pakistan and other countries with ongoing transmission of cVDPV such as Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR). You may also refer to this website address for complete listing of countries: <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/statements/2016/8th-IHR-emergency-committee-polio/en/>

- All travelers of all ages going to countries with ongoing poliovirus outbreaks should receive a dose of oral poliovirus vaccine (OPV) or inactivated poliovirus vaccine (IPV) between four weeks and 12 months prior to travel.
- Those undertaking urgent travel who have not received a dose of OPV or IPV in the previous four weeks to 12 months, should receive a dose of polio vaccine at least by the time of departure as this will still provide benefit, particularly for frequent travelers.
- Travelers must secure a Certificate of Vaccination that will serve as proof of vaccination prior to departure

For inquiries, please contact Department of Health – Family Health Office at 651-7800 local 1726-1730.


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