News/Update: Discontinued use of trivalent oral polio vaccine (tOPV)
5th May, 2016

Dear State Refugee Health Coordinator,

As of May 1, 2016, all use of trivalent oral polio vaccine (tOPV), which protects against all three types of poliovirus, should have stopped worldwide. tOPV has been replaced with bivalent oral polio vaccine (bOPV), which protects against types 1 and 3 poliovirus. bOPV is administered on the same schedule as tOPV and can be used to complete polio immunization for individuals who have been incompletely immunized with tOPV. The transition from tOPV to bOPV, overseas, is critical to polio eradication because any use of tOPV after May 1, 2016 could jeopardize polio eradication by generating circulating vaccine-derived polioviruses from the type 2 component of the vaccine. Further information on the Polio Endgame Strategic Plan can be found at: http://www.who.int/immunization/diseases/poliomyelitis/endgame_objective2/en/.

In accordance with this global switch, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and other overseas panel physicians have discontinued use of tOPV. Unfortunately, bOPV is not yet readily available in several countries where US-bound refugees are departing, such as Thailand. Therefore, there may be a gap in administering the second dose of polio vaccine. Any missed doses will be marked as ‘unavailable’ on the refugee’s medical forms. Resettlement states and clinicians should refer to each arriving refugee’s DS-3025 (Vaccination Documentation Worksheet) form to determine which vaccinations were administered overseas. Since bOPV completely replaces tOPV and is administered on the same schedule, these forms do not distinguish between tOPV and bOPV.

Upon arrival in the United States, clinicians should continue to screen and vaccinate recent refugee arrivals as per CDC and ACIP recommendations, respectively.

CDC and overseas partners will continue to monitor bOPV availability and use in US-bound refugees, and will provide additional information and recommendations, as necessary.

Sincerely,

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