

## **Oral Poliomyelitis Vaccine (OPV)**

### **Poliomyelitis**

Poliomyelitis is caused by one of the 3 types of Poliovirus (1,2, and 3). It enters the body through oral route and eventually invades the central nervous system. Symptoms include fever, severe muscle pain, stiffness in the neck and back, paralysis, or even breathing difficulty and death.

### **Oral Poliomyelitis Vaccine ( OPV )**

#### ***A. Why get vaccinated?***

Oral Poliomyelitis Vaccine ( OPV ) is an attenuated live vaccine which can effectively protect against poliomyelitis. All babies and children should be vaccinated.

#### ***B. When should my child get vaccinated?***

All newborn should have received Oral Polio Type I vaccine in hospitals before discharge. For the best and lasting protection, children should receive another 2 doses of Trivalent OPV in the first year of life (starting from 2 months of age, separated by 2 months in between). A booster dose of OPV will be given when the child is 18 months of age. An inoculation team of the Department of Health will visit all local primary schools every year to deliver another 2 doses of booster OPV to all primary one and primary six students.

OPV can be given at the same time with other vaccines.

#### ***C. Some individuals should NOT get OPV or should wait***

1. serious allergic reaction to a previous dose of OPV or its constituents
2. known history of severe allergy to neomycin or polymyxin B
3. individuals or household close contacts with the following conditions\* :
  - cancer
  - on long term corticosteroids
  - HIV carriers or those suffering from AIDS
  - immunodeficiency

\* **Inactivated Poliomyelitis Vaccine (IPV)** can be given in these situations

***D. What are the Risks?***

- As with any medicine, OPV carries a small risk of adverse reaction.
- On rare occasions, OPV can cause poliomyelitis (about 1 in 2.5 million chance) because it contains live, but weakened virus. Since the vaccinee will pass the virus in stools, close household contacts who are not completely immunized against poliomyelitis would also be at risk. Therefore, **the child's caretaker(s) should observe strict personal hygiene and wash their hands thoroughly after changing napkins.**

**If you have any query, please ask the nurses or doctors at our Maternal & Child Health Centre of the Department of Health.**