

## HALTON REGION PUBLIC HEALTH • Office of the Medical Officer of Health

TEL: 905-825-6000 • TOLL FREE: 1-866-442-5866 • FAX: 905-825-1444

TO: Halton Physicians, Nurse Practitioners, Emergency Departments, other Healthcare Providers

FROM: Dr. Joanna Oda, Associate Medical Officer of Health

DATE: June 13, 2024

RE: ISPA and updated recommendations for children previously immunized with oral polio vaccine (OPV)

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### QUICK FACTS

- In the upcoming 2024-2025 school year, Halton Region Public Health will be enforcing the *Immunization of School Pupils Act* (ISPA) for students born in 2007-2010 and 2017 (students in Grades 2, 9, 10, 11 & 12).
- Students must have complete immunization records or a valid vaccine exemption on file with Public Health.
- Ministry of Health requirements for children previously immunized with the oral poliovirus vaccine (OPV) have been updated. The recommendations align with updated guidance from the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) as stated in the Canadian Immunization Guide (CIG).
- The new requirements mainly affect people immunized outside of Canada, as OPV has not been available in Canada since 1996.
- Halton Region Public Health is reviewing student immunization records and will update parents if their children now require additional IPV doses.

### KEY MESSAGES FOR HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

- Your office may experience an increase in immunization-related requests as parents respond to letters from Public Health related to ISPA enforcement.
- Some children previously considered up to date for polio vaccine may now require re-immunization.
- Effective immediately, OPV doses administered on or after April 1, 2016, are considered **invalid** and an age-appropriate series of IPV or IPV-containing vaccine should be completed.
- This change is due to the World Health Organization coordinated global switch for countries who administer the oral polio vaccine – replacing the trivalent oral polio vaccine (tOPV) with the bivalent OPV (bOPV), which contains poliovirus serotypes 1 and 3, but not serotype 2. Due to this change, healthcare providers should presume that children vaccinated internationally with documented dose(s) of OPV administered on or after April 1, 2016, received bOPV.
- To ensure protection against all three poliovirus types, children who received OPV should complete their polio vaccine series with an inactivated polio vaccine (IPV) or an IPV-containing vaccine using an age-appropriate schedule. More details are available from [Public Health Ontario](#).

- Patients with incomplete immunization or lacking adequate documentation of immunization should be considered unimmunized and started on an [immunization schedule](#) appropriate for their age and risk factors.
- Single and multiple dose formats of IPV are now available to order under the routine/influenza vaccine order section of the Vaccine Order Form. Ensure that you have no more than a one-month supply on hand when placing your order.
- If you have questions about a student's record, please call 311 and ask to speak to an Immunization Nurse.
- Some students may be eligible for medical exemptions based on serologic immunity, clinical diagnosis of disease or a true vaccine contraindication. The Statement of Medical Exemption form must be filled out by a medical doctor or nurse practitioner.

### **KEY MESSAGES FOR PATIENTS**

- Parents or guardians are responsible for reporting all their child's immunizations to Public Health, including any school-based vaccines that were not given by Public Health, by visiting [halton.ca/immunize](http://halton.ca/immunize).
- Families seeking a vaccine exemption due to personal choice must complete a Vaccine Education Session and a Statement of Conscience or Religious Belief form. Visit [halton.ca/immunize](http://halton.ca/immunize) for more information.
- Immunization is the best way to protect your child, family, and community from life-threatening diseases.

### **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

- Ministry of Health, [Q&A for Immunizers: Recommendations for Children Previously Immunized with Oral Poliovirus Vaccine](#)
- Public Health Ontario, [Summary of Immunization Recommendations for Children Previously Immunized with Oral Poliovirus Vaccine](#)
- [Publicly Funded Immunization Schedules for Ontario](#)

Please report all suspected/confirmed cases of [Diseases of Public Health Significance](#) (only report COVID-19 cases occurring in high-risk settings) to Public Health immediately by calling 311, 905-825-6000 or toll free at 1-866-442-5866.

PLEASE PROVIDE A COPY TO ALL PHYSICIANS IN YOUR OFFICE AND/OR POST IN EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS AND PHYSICIAN LOUNGES. IF YOU HAVE ANY ISSUES WITH THIS ATTACHMENT, PLEASE EMAIL [DOCTORS@HALTON.CA](mailto:DOCTORS@HALTON.CA).