



Government of Sierra Leone
Ministry of Health and Sanitation
Directorate of Primary Health Care
Health Education Division

POLIO VIRUS & VACCINES

KEY MESSAGES

Version 23 December 2020

KEY MESSAGES - GENERAL POPULATION

WHAT IS POLIO?

- Polio is a sickness caused by polio virus.
- It usually spreads through food and water that are not clean.
- Children up to 5 years of age need to be protected from this sickness. The younger the child, the higher their risk of getting polio.
- A child with polio can have fever, tiredness, headache, vomiting, and weakness or paralysis in the arms and legs. It can cause the foot and the hand and it can also lead to death.
- Any child under 15 years old who was crawling or walking and who suddenly no longer crawls or walks **could** have been infected with polio. This needs to be confirmed with additional tests because there are other conditions that present in a similar manner.
- Polio can limit the growth and development of the child.
- It is very important that every child must get the marklate in order to keep polio out of Sierra Leone.
- The last case of polio in Sierra Leone was in 2010 in Port Loko.

WHY VACCINATE AGAINST POLIO?

- There is no cure for polio. Polio can be prevented only by polio marklate.
- Polio is one of the few sicknesses that can be ended in a country by giving every child polio marklate. Just like how Sierra Leone once had smallpox but succeeded in driving it out by giving every child smallpox marklate. We can win against polio too!
- The more polio marklate your child gets, the more protection they get from polio.



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- Polio marklate helps make your child grow strong and healthy.
- Polio marklate is free and safe.

WHAT ARE THE POLIO MARKLATES?

- There are two kinds of polio marklates given in Sierra Leone to protect children from getting polio. One is an oral marklate given by mouth. The other is given by injection.
- Children should get both of these marklates for the best protection against polio.
- All children should receive both 4 doses of the oral marklate (OPV) by mouth and one dose of the marklate by injection (IPV).
- Caregivers should bring the child to the hospital at birth, 6 weeks, 10 weeks and 14 weeks for the oral marklate. The child should also get the injection marklate at 14 weeks.

IS POLIO BACK IN THE COUNTRY?

- As long as polio exists anywhere, it remains a threat everywhere. This is why health workers in Sierra Leone conducts polio surveillance activities. This helps us to know about any cases right away so action can be taken before it can spread to other children.
- It was this process that found these three cases of polio type 2 virus. The cases are from children in Kambia/Port Loko, Tonkolili and Western Area Rural.
- Three cases of type 2 polio virus have been isolated. **Further investigations are ongoing to determine their category, source, and origin of the poliovirus.**
- The Ministry of Health and Sanitation will continue to provide updates as results of investigation unfold.

WHY DID THESE CASES HAPPEN IF THE CHILDREN GOT THEIR MARKLATES?

- Polio can spread if children in communities are not fully vaccinated with all polio marklates, which means they are not protected against polio and it can easily attack them.
- While there is still polio, every child will remain at risk and needs to receive the marklate during each campaign, as well as during routine immunization at the health facility. No child is safe if there is one child who is not vaccinated. Therefore, every child must be vaccinated during every polio campaign because every missed child is a place for polio to hide and spread.



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- It takes multiple doses of vaccine to develop full and life-long immunity against polio.
- It is very important to administer multiple doses of polio vaccine to children. The vaccine is safe, and every additional dose further strengthens a child's protection against polio and ensures that they are not a *carrier* of the virus.
- With COVID-19 emergency, many children have not been receiving the polio vaccine making them at even more risk of getting the polio disease.

IT'S CALLED VACCINE-DERIVED POLIO – DOES THAT MEAN IT COMES FROM THE VACCINE? IS THE ORAL POLIO VACCINE (OPV) SAFE?

- If not enough children are vaccinated and protected against polio, the virus can pass between individuals and can cause paralysis.
- *Children who receive all their Polio marklates will not get Polio. Children who do not get all the Polio marklates are at risk of having polio, even from weaken Polio virus from marklate.*
- Polio marklate stop person-to-person spread of polio. The only way to stop polio is by making sure every child gets all the doses of the polio marklate.
- Polio vaccine is a safe and extremely effective vaccine which has successfully brought us to the brink of eradication of wild polio virus, eliminating over 99% of polio cases worldwide. In Sierra Leone, no case had been detected since 2010.

WASH MESSAGES TO BE ADDED

- People infected with the Polio virus can shed the virus in their stool for several weeks unnoticed and are likely to infect others with the virus due to poor hygiene and sanitation.
- Polio enters the body through the mouth from hands contaminated with stool from a person who has Polio virus. Usually this is due to poor hand washing or by eating/drinking contaminated food or water.
- Washing hands with soap and water ...



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KEY MESSAGES - COMMUNITY AND RELIGIOUS LEADERS

WHAT IS POLIO?

- Polio is a highly infectious disease caused by a virus which mostly affects young children. The virus can cause life-long paralysis or even death in a matter of hours.

HOW DOES POLIO SPREAD?

- Polio usually spreads silently in communities where children are under immunized.
- It enters the body through the mouth usually from hands contaminated with stool from an infected person. Usually this is due to poor hand washing or by eating/drinking contaminated food or water. Those infected with the virus can shed the virus in their stool for several weeks and are likely to infect others with the virus due to poor hygiene and sanitation.
- Polio is silent until the paralysis occurs, so infected people can spread the virus to others even if they do not show signs of infection.

WHO SHOULD BE VACCINATED?

- All children aged 0-5 should be vaccinated, even if they are sick.
- Every additional dose during the National Immunization Days (NID) means the child gets additional protection protecting the child against polio.

HOW POLIO VACCINE BE ADMINISTERED?

- Polio vaccine is an oral vaccine. It will be administered via two drops, given into the mouth of the child.

HOW POLIO VACCINE IS SAFE?

- **Polio vaccine is safe.** The vaccine has gone through regular and robust clinical trials, including being guided by clear and established ethical guidelines, that have shown it is safe.



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- **It is safe to administer many doses of vaccine to children.** It is very important to administer multiple doses of polio vaccine to children. Every additional dose further strengthens a child's protection against polio and ensures that they are not a carrier of the virus.

HOW YOU CAN HELP FIND AND REPORT AFP CASES?

- **Any child under 15 years** old who was crawling or walking and **who suddenly no longer crawls, or walks could** have been infected with polio.
- This needs to be confirmed by doing additional tests and investigations as it can be the **results of Polio or others diseases and conditions.**
- Any case of paralysis should be reported as quickly as possible (ideally within 14 days but can be reported up to 6 months). The sooner the medical workers know about the case, the faster they can run tests and see if it is due to polio. If it is polio, one infected child can infect 200 other children in the community rapidly and each infected child in turn spreads the virus to other children.
- Even though the child is taken to the traditional healer / religious places for treatments, they should also be reported and referred to the nearest health facility for further investigations.

POLIO VACCINATION CAMPAIGN KEY MESSAGES

- Polio vaccine is the **only way to prevent polio disease.**
- Two drops of polio vaccine are **given into a mouth of a child multiple times to ensure the child is protected** against polio for life. That's why it is called Oral Polio Vaccine.
- **Polio vaccine is safe and effective.** It does not have side effects.
- Polio vaccine is very effective in stopping polio outbreaks. To stop an outbreak, all eligible children should be vaccinated during each campaign. **If many children are missed the poliovirus will continue spreading and infecting unimmunized children.**
- Polio vaccine contains weakened poliovirus, which is not harmful. Once it enters the body, it activates the immune system, which detects the virus and develops protection (immunity) against it.
- **It takes multiple doses of vaccine to develop full and life-long immunity against poliovirus.** Therefore, it is very important that a child is vaccinated in each vaccination campaign and no child is missed in each vaccination.



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KEY MESSAGES

NON-MEDICAL INFLUENCERS

KEY OVERARCHING MESSAGES

- **Polio is back** and there is an outbreak in our community and country.
- Poliovirus is spreading because children are not immunized, which means they are not protected against poliovirus and it can easily attack them.
- **Polio can cause life-long paralysis** and even **death**.
- There is **no cure** for polio, it **can only be prevented through vaccination**.
- Government, with stakeholders and partners led by WHO, is working to address the root cause for this current polio emergency by strengthening routine immunization.

WHAT IS POLIO?

- Polio is a highly infectious disease caused by a virus which mostly affects young children. The virus can cause life-long paralysis or even death in a matter of hours.

HOW IS IT SPREAD?

- Polio usually spreads silently in communities where children are under immunized.
- It enters the body through the mouth usually from hands contaminated with stool of an infected person. Usually this is due to poor hand washing or by eating/drinking contaminated food or water and is aggravated by low immunization coverage in the area. Those infected with the virus can shed the virus in their stool for several weeks and are likely to infect others with the virus due to poor hygiene and sanitation.
- Poliovirus is silent, so infected people can spread the virus to others even if they don't show signs of infection.



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HOW SAFE AND EFFECTIVE IS THE VACCINE?

- Vaccines have saved millions of children worldwide and help Sierra Leone to not have one case since 2010. It is the best way to protect children from dangerous diseases. As a result, polio has dramatically decreased globally.
- Before being licensed, vaccines undergo extensive testing and reviews to check they are safe and work well.
- All vaccines provided at health facilities have been licensed and approved through the World Health Organization (WHO).

WHO SHOULD BE VACCINATED?

- All children aged 0 to 5 should be vaccinated, even if they are sick. It is important that sick children are immunized, because their immunity levels are lower than other children and they need to be protected against the polio virus.
- To provide every child with a life-long protection from polio, every child should be vaccinated during every round of polio campaign and during routine immunization.
- Every additional dose during the National Immunization Days (NID/SNID) means the child gets additional protection against polio.

HOW WILL POLIO VACCINE BE ADMINISTERED?

- Polio vaccine is an oral vaccine. It will be administered via two drops, given into the mouth of the child. This is the same as for other oral polio vaccines.

IS POLIO VACCINE SAFE?

- Yes. Polio vaccine is extremely safe and effective at protecting children against lifelong polio paralysis. Polio vaccines have gone through regular and robust clinical trials and were guided by clear and established ethical guidelines. These trials have shown the vaccine is safe and effective in providing immunity against polio and in controlling outbreaks as well as preventing infection.



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HOW MANY DOSES OF POLIO VACCINE DOES A CHILD NEED TO BE PROTECTED FROM POLIO?

- The more the child get Polio vaccine (OPV and IPV), the better he/she is protected.
- While there is still polio, every child will remain at risk and needs to receive the vaccine during each campaign, as well as during routine immunization at the health facility. No child is safe if there is one child who is under-immunized. Therefore, every child must be immunized during every polio campaign because every missed child is a place for polio to hide and spread.

IS IT SAFE TO ADMINISTER SO MANY DOSES OF VACCINE TO CHILDREN?

- Yes, it is safe, and it is very important that children receive multiple doses of polio vaccine. The vaccine is safe and every additional dose further strengthens a child's immunity against polio making sure they are not a carrier of the virus.

HOW CAN POLIO OUTBREAKS BE STOPPED?

Experience shows that they have been easier to stop than outbreaks of wild poliovirus. They can be rapidly stopped, with 2-3 rounds of high-quality, large-scale Supplementary Immunisation Activities. If a circulated vaccine-derive Polio virus does occur, population immunity levels must be rapidly increased with mass immunization with OPV. The only way to prevent a cVDPV from occurring is to maintain high immunization coverage.

WHY DO WE CONTINUE TO USE OPV, INSTEAD OF IPV?

Both OPV and IPV are safe and offer personal protection. However, only OPV has a unique ability to induce mucosal (gut) immunity, needed to interrupt person-to-person spread of poliovirus. Hence, OPV is needed to eradicate polio. However, once polio has been eradicated, OPV use will need to be withdrawn, to eliminate the long-term risk of vaccine-derivate polio virus.

OPV is easy to administer.



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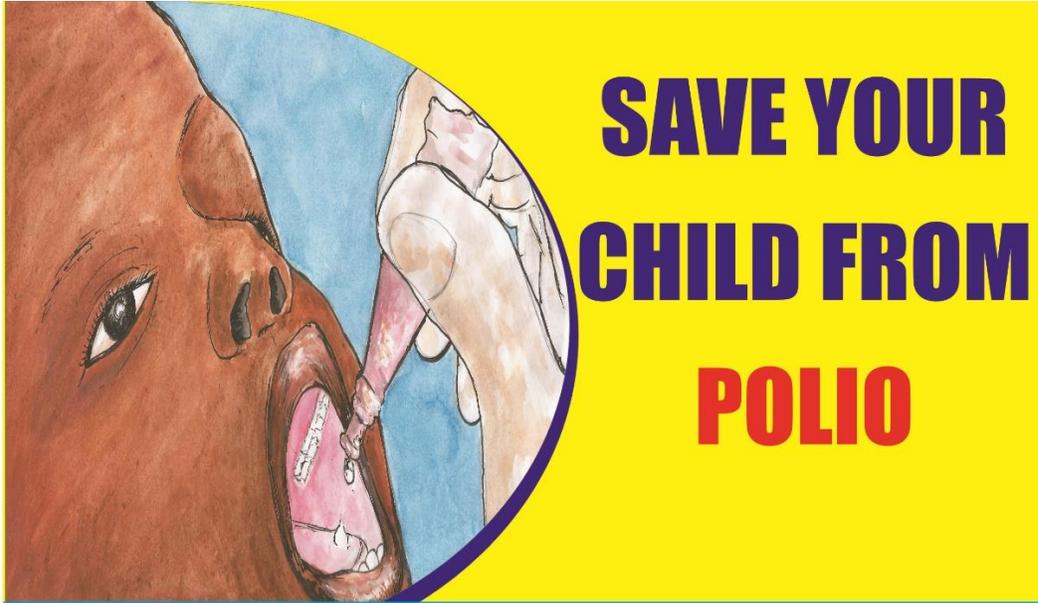
AWARENESS CARDS

**SAVE CHILDREN FROM POLIO
GET THEM IMMUNISED!**

POLIO MARKLATE IS FREE



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POLIO MARKLATE IS SAFE AND FREE





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VACCINATE YOUR CHILD AGAINST POLIO

WHAT IS POLIO?

Polio is a disease caused by polio virus.
It can cause lifelong paralysis and it can be deadly.
But polio vaccine can protect against polio.

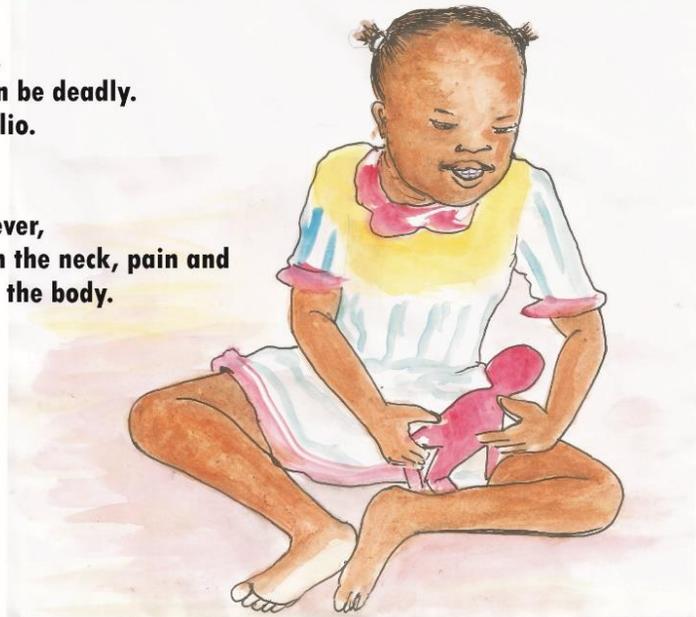
WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF POLIO?

A person infected with polio can have fever,
fatigue, headache, vomiting, stiffness in the neck, pain and
weakness in the limbs or other parts of the body.

IS THERE A CURE FOR POLIO?

No, there is no cure for polio
and the disease can hinder the
growth and development of the
child.

Polio can be prevented only
by immunizing your child
with polio vaccines.





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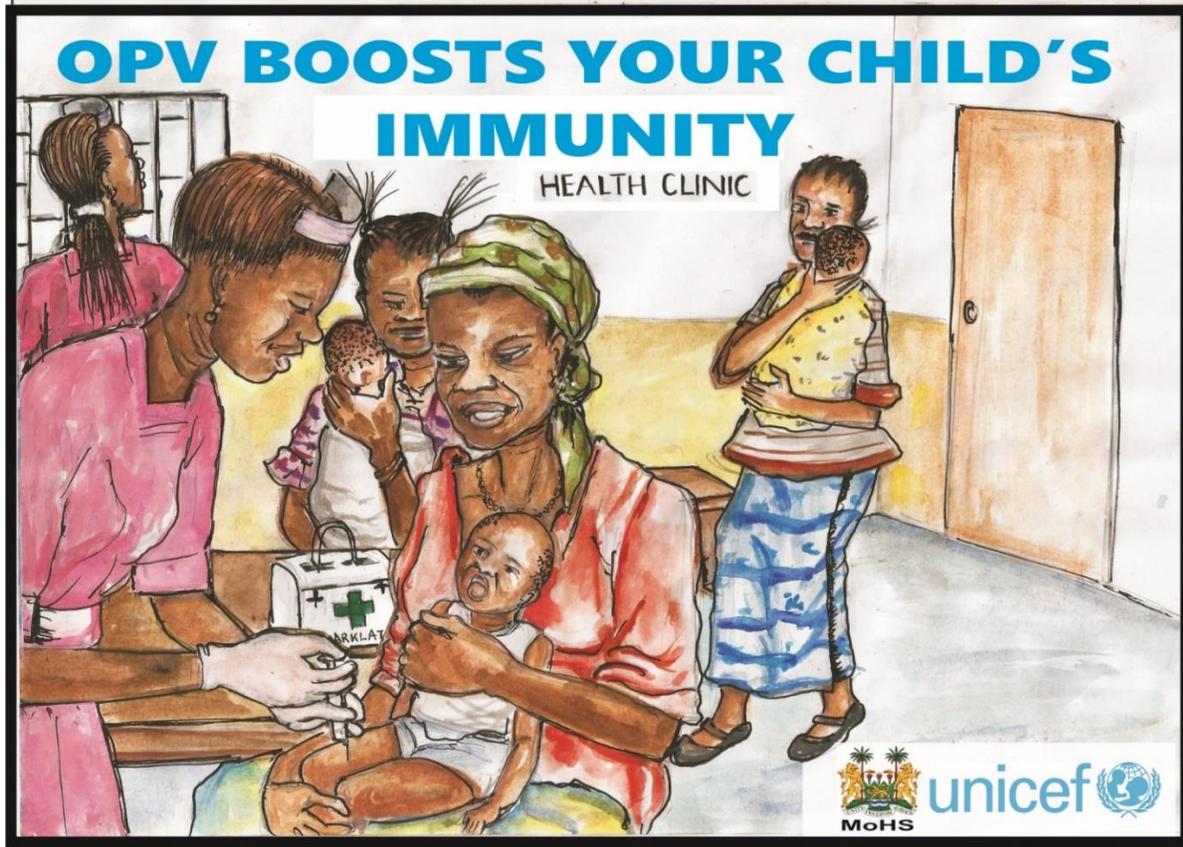
**OPV + IPV IS SAFE
AND EFFECTIVE**

**IT MAKES
YOUR
CHILD GROW
STRONG AND
HEALTHY**





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FACTS ABOUT OPV AND IPV

WHAT IS OPV?

OPV is Oral Polio Vaccine and given orally (two drops in the mouth) to prevent Polio.

WHAT IS IPV?

IPV is Injectable Polio Vaccine. It is an injection given to the child by a trained health worker injected on the thigh to prevent Polio.

WHY ARE OPV AND IPV BOTH GIVEN TO MY CHILDREN?

OPV and IPV are given to ensure additional protection of your child against Polio. The combination of both is more effective to stop polio transmission.

IS THE COMBINATION OF OPV AND IPV SAFE?

Yes, the combination of the OPV and IPV is completely safe for your child.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF OPV AND IPV?

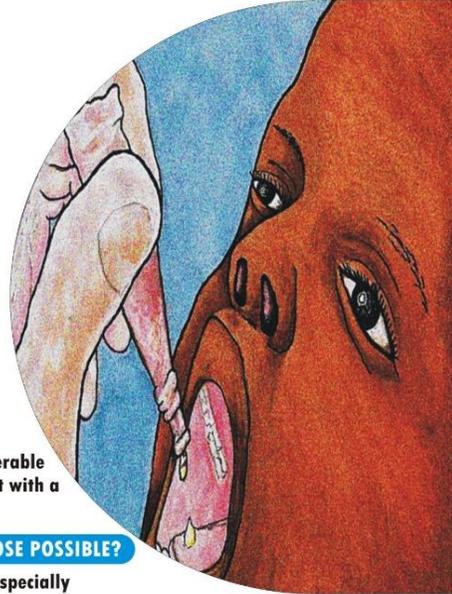
OPV and IPV are safe vaccines with none or extremely rare side effects.

WHY DO CHILDREN NEED SO MANY VACCINES?

Children are given vaccines at a young age because this is when they are most vulnerable to life-threatening diseases. Routine immunization is often the first and only contact with a child after birth.

IF BOTH OPV AND IPV ARE GIVEN TO THE SAME CHILD, IS A VACCINE OVERDOSE POSSIBLE?

No. In fact, the vaccines can work together to induce a stronger immune response, especially where wild poliovirus is still circulating.



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**TAKE ALL CHILDREN UNDER 5's FOR MARKLATE AT
LEAST 6 TIMES TO THE NEAREST HEALTH FACILITY**



BRING YOUR CHILD'S MARKLATE CARD WITH YOU.





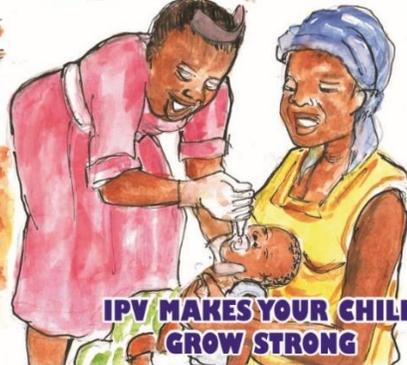
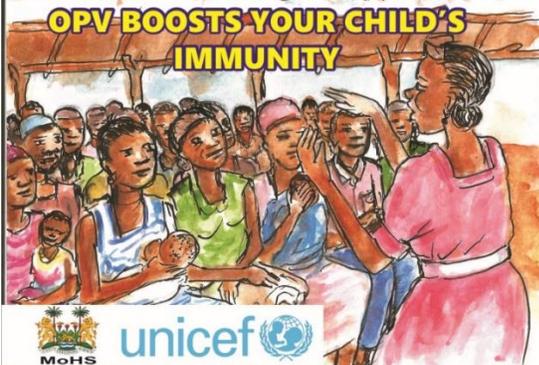
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**ALL VACCINES FOR CHILDREN
 ARE FREE AND SAFE**

**CARRY ALL CHILDREN UNDER 5 YEARS
 FOR VACCINATION**



**OPV BOOSTS YOUR CHILD'S
 IMMUNITY**

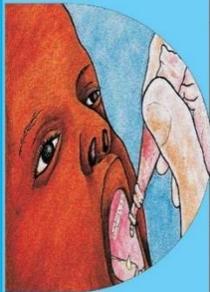


**IPV MAKES YOUR CHILD
 GROW STRONG**



DON'T WAIT...VACCINATE NOW!!

CONTACT	AGE	VACCINES
1	Birth	BCG OPV-0
2	6 weeks	DPT-HepB-Hib1 (Penta1); PCV1; OPV1; ROTA1
3	10 weeks	DPT-HepB-Hib2 (Penta2); PCV2; OPV2; ROTA2
4	14 weeks	DPT-HepB-Hib3 (Penta3); PCV3; OPV3
5	9 months	MCV1; Yellow Fever
6	15 months	MCV2



ALL VACCINES ARE FREE AND SAFE





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DID YOU KNOW VACCINES PREVENT YOUR CHILDREN FROM LIFE THREATENING DISEASES

- **BCG prevents TB (TUBERCULOSIS)**
- **OPV-0, OPV1, OPV2 AND OPV3 prevents your child from polio**
- **DPT HepB Hib1 (PENTA1 & PENTA2 & PENTA3) prevents your child from**



- ➔ **Diphtheria**
- ➔ **Whooping Cough**
- ➔ **Tetanus**
- ➔ **Polio**
- ➔ **Influenza**
- ➔ **Hepatitis B**



- **PCV1, PCV2, PCV3 prevents from Pneumonia**
- **ROTA1, ROTA2 prevents from Diarrhoea**
- **MCV1 & MCV2 prevents from Measles**
- **Yellow Fever vaccine prevents from Yellow Fever**



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MARKLATE IS FREE AND SAFE



BRING YOUR CHILD'S MARKLATE CARD WITH YOU





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ALL VACCINES FOR CHILDREN ARE FREE AND SAFE

