



A young girl has her finger marked with ink to show she has received the polio vaccine. Kabul 16 May 2016 – The Ministry of Public Health, with the support of WHO and UNICEF, launched a national campaign today to vaccinate every child under the age of 5 against polio in Afghanistan. The immunization campaign will run throughout Afghanistan for 4 days with 65 000 trained health workers aiming to vaccinate over 9 million children.

During this polio immunization round all children aged 2–5 years will also receive de-worming tablets. These tablets prevent worm infections that cause anaemia, malnourishment and impaired mental and physical development in children, and improve children’s overall health and development.

“We need to reach all children with life-saving polio vaccines in order to protect Afghan children’s health and make Afghanistan polio-free. The vaccine is safe and it is the only effective prevention for polio which is a crippling and incurable disease,” said Dr Richard Peepkorn, WHO Country Representative. “WHO recently supported the training of over 60 000 Afghan frontline polio workers to further enhance their skills in vaccination, campaign monitoring and interpersonal communications. Polio vaccinators are trusted community members and they have been selected because they care about children and their health.”

“This is first time that a modified revisit strategy will be implemented across the country. Houses with children missed from vaccination during the 3 days of campaign will be again revisited on the Friday to reach those children,” said Dr Peepkorn.

Afghanistan and Pakistan are the only remaining polio-endemic countries in the world. So far this year there have been 5 polio cases in Afghanistan – this places all children at risk of polio infection. Every child under the age of 5 should be vaccinated during each immunization round. The vaccine is completely safe also for newborn and sick children and it has no side-effects.

Stopping the circulation of the wild poliovirus in Afghanistan is possible this year if every child is reached during every vaccination campaign. Parents and caregivers who miss having their children vaccinated over the next 4 days are urged to visit local health centres where their children can be vaccinated against polio.

Related link

[Polio Eradication Initiative](#)

Saturday 17th of May 2025 04:31:19 PM