

Towards global polio eradication: Australia's commitment to the global eradication of poliovirus by 2005

- Do you have or have you ever stored samples of poliovirus?
- Do you have or have you ever stored samples that might potentially harbour such virus (eg. faecal or throat swab samples)?

If the answer is yes to either of these questions, the stores of poliovirus and potentially infectious materials should be included on a national inventory currently being compiled by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing (the Department) as part of Australia's commitment to the global polio eradication process.

The laboratory containment of poliovirus is a vital step towards Australia receiving World Health Organisation certification as a polio-free nation. The WHO is aiming to globally certify global eradication of poliovirus by 2005. To ensure this happens, the Department needs to make contact with all organisations in Australia that store all existing sources of poliovirus.

Who should contact us?

As Australia's last reported case of locally acquired poliomyelitis was in 1972, the only known sources of poliovirus now remaining are within laboratories. These sources need to be appropriately contained and identified for the purposes of the national inventory.

The Department needs to contact laboratories that may hold:

- stocks of poliovirus;
- reference strains of poliovirus;
- potentially infectious materials such as clinical samples (eg. faecal samples, throat swabs);
- environmental samples (eg. water or sewage samples);
- research materials (eg. wild poliovirus capsid); and
- untyped enterovirus.

If you are an organisation that has laboratories that may store some of the materials listed above and you have not already been contacted by the Department, or you are unsure as to whether or not the samples you hold are potentially infectious, please contact: The Infection Management Section on (02) 6289 8951 or email at jo.pendergast@health.gov.au for more information and to complete the appropriate questionnaire.