



# MEASLES AWARENESS NEWSLETTER

## Measles

As of 16 February 2023, South Africa has declared an outbreak of the measles infection. Children between ages 1-15 years are mostly affected. Five of the nine provinces are declared outbreak spots and Limpopo province leads with the highest number of cases to date. The good thing is measles is preventable through immunisation. Here is what you need to know to protect your family.

Measles is a highly contagious viral illness. This means that it spreads very easily. The virus stays in the mucus of the nose and throat for up to 14 days before it shows off symptoms. This is called an incubation period. During this time, you unknowingly spread measles to others.

### Measles is spread in any of the following ways:



Inhalation of air droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes



Contact through touch or fluids: e.g., handshakes, contaminated surfaces, kissing, sharing drinks



Mother to baby transmission during pregnancy, labour or breastfeeding

### SYMPTOMS

1. High Fever, runny nose, sore throat, red eyes
2. Tiny white spots in the mouth
3. A tell-tale red blotchy rash that typically starts in hairline, involves the face, spreads down the neck, trunk, limbs, feet, and hands. If you know or suspect that you have measles, stay off school or work to stop the spread.

| COMPLICATIONS  | TREATMENT  | PREVENTION   |
|--|--|--|
| Sometimes measles may complicate and lead to infection of the ear, inflammation of the voice box (laryngitis), inflammation of airway tubes (bronchitis) and inflammation of the brain(encephalitis) and diarrhea. Encephalitis can lead to deafness and brain damage even months after the measles infection. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. There is no specific treatment for measles. Most symptoms go away with plenty of rest, drinking plenty of fluids and taking fever medication (e.g., paracetamol). The rash typically fades away on its own within 4 to 5 days.</li> <li>2. With children, take Vitamin A as prescribed</li> <li>3. Keep in mind: viruses are not treated with antibiotics; your health provider will prescribe antibiotics for measles only if necessary.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Immunization is the most effective way to prevent measles.</li> <li>2. Pregnant women, children between the ages of 6 months and 15 years are encouraged to complete immunization.</li> <li>3. Before taking measles vaccine, inform your health provider if you have a history of allergies, have any immune deficiency illness, are pregnant, have Tuberculosis (TB) and if you had another vaccine in the previous four weeks.</li> <li>4. Sizwe Hosmed covers measles immunisation across all options in line with the National Department of Health immunisation program. Measles vaccine is free in public health care facilities as part of regular National Immunisation Programme.</li> </ol> |

Sanitise surfaces, keep your hands clean, cover the nose and mouth when coughing and sneezing, skip school, work from home when exposed and stop the spread!