

## DEAR PEOPLE OF KZN, LET'S AVOID MAKING PUBLIC GATHERINGS A BREEDING GROUND FOR COVID-19 SECOND WAVE

**The maximum number of people who are permitted public gatherings such as events, funerals and church services under National Lockdown Level 2 is 50.**

However, there seems to be some level of disregard of this restriction by some citizens of this province across all communities. This is worrisome behaviour we all need to desist from immediately, in order to avoid making ourselves vulnerable to a second wave of COVID-19 infections. Even though there is a noticeable decline in the rate of new COVID – 19 infections and deaths; KwaZulu Natal continues to be the second province with the highest number of laboratory confirmed cases countrywide.

Therefore, we need to be alive to the fact that COVID-19 is not gone and still as ruthless as ever. We cannot afford to behave as though things are back to normal and conduct our business like in the old days, before the onset of this disease.

### RESTRICTIONS ON PUBLIC GATHERINGS UNDER LEVEL 2

Restrictions on the following public engagements are as follows:

#### FUNERALS

- Human remains can only be viewed in a hospital or private mortuary
- The COVID-19 mortal remains must not be kept more than 7 days at the mortuary
- Only close family members should attend a funeral or burial service
- Any person or family member who is ill, has confirmed

positive for COVID-19 or has symptoms of this disease, should not attend a burial service

- Mourners must wear a mask and observe social distancing during and after burial
- Those who are tasked with placing the body in the grave must wear protective gear and wash hands with soap and water.
- The burial service must be as short as possible, and may not exceed two hours in order to minimise possible exposure.

A maximum of 50 people only should attend funeral services. Members of the public are requested to abide by this new norm and afford grieving families the opportunity to bid farewell to their loved ones without contravening the abovementioned restrictions.

#### CHURCH SERVICES






Church gatherings are permitted, but still limited to 50 people per service. Masks are always an essential item for church services.

#### EVENTS

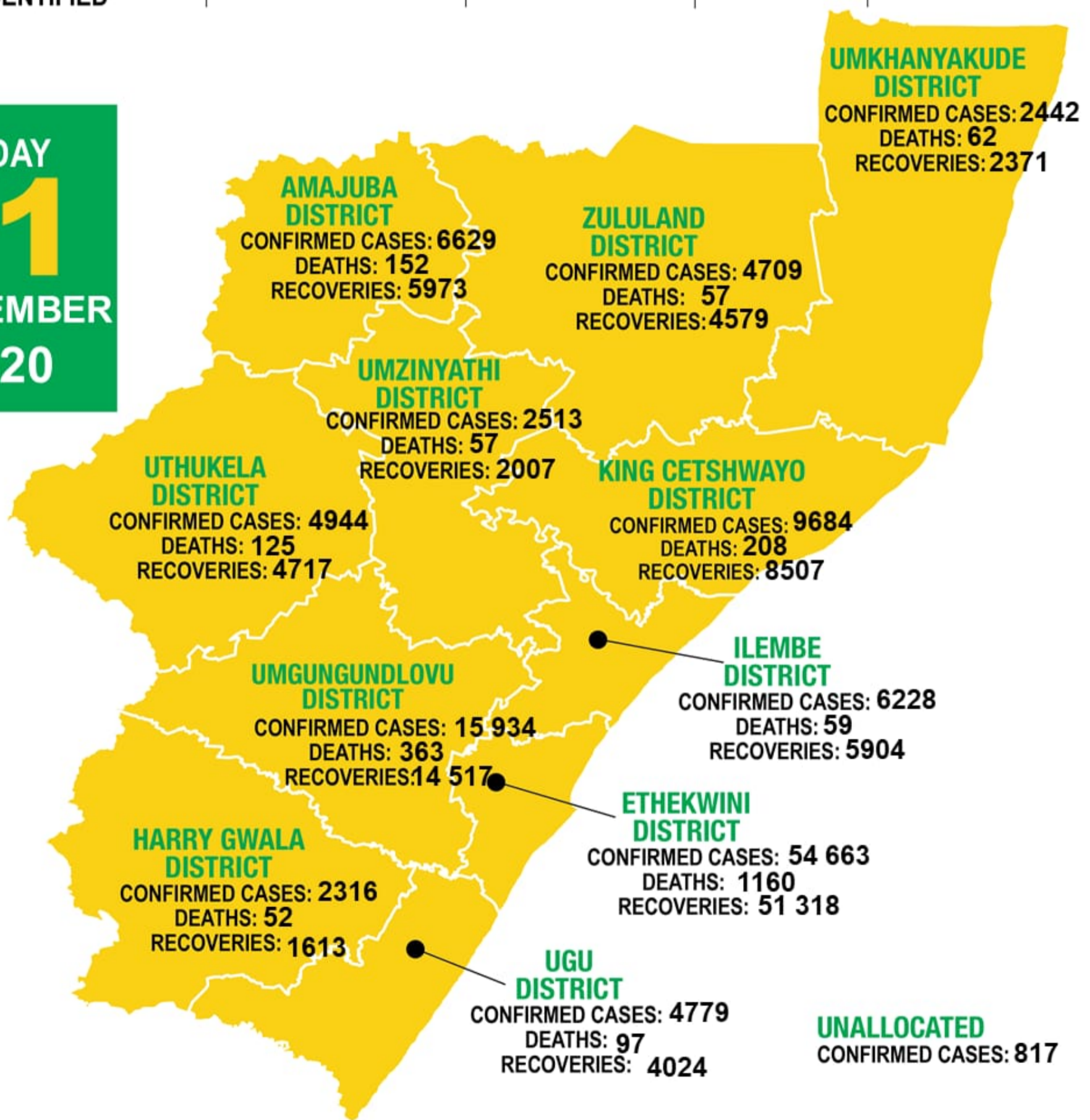
Attendance for all corporate events is also limited to 50 people with strict adherence to hygiene protocols and observation of social distancing. We applaud all those who have and continue to observe these protocols. We thank them for acting in an appropriate manner to protect themselves, their families and neighbours, and the people of KwaZulu-Natal at large. We equally urge those who are lacking in this regard, to change their ways and abide by these regulations.

Together, let's pledge solidarity in action to minimise the risk of new infections. It is in our hands, it's possible and it's doable. Working together, we will defeat COVID-19.

# COVID-19 STATISTICS IN **KZN**

				
<b>115 658</b>	<b>7 736</b>	<b>105530</b>	<b>2392</b>	<b>285</b>
POSITIVE CASES IDENTIFIED	ACTIVE CASES	RECOVERIES	DEATHS	NEW CASES

**FRIDAY**  
**11**  
**SEPTEMBER**  
**2020**



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NICD Hotline: 0800 029 999  
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# PREGNANCY IN COVID-19 TIMES

**PREGNANCY CAN BE A FRIGHTENING EXPERIENCE, ESPECIALLY FOR FIRST-TIME MOTHERS, WITH WELCOMING A NEW LIFE INTO THE WORLD.**

More so now with the COVID-19 pandemic in our midst, it sparks more fear and worry to moms who are still yet to give birth and raise a child in these uncertain times. However, being pregnant during COVID-19 doesn't have to be a scary experience, if correct protocols are followed.

New research from the British Medical Journal (BMJ) backed up by the World Health Organization (WHO) found that women who are suspected or confirmed with COVID-19 are less likely to experience fever or muscle pain, but if they develop severe disease, they are more likely to need intensive care than non-pregnant women with COVID-19.

Here is a list of questions that you might have about being pregnant during COVID-19 that might help you to put your mind at ease:

## **I am pregnant; does that mean I'm at a higher risk of COVID-19?**

Research from the WHO suggests that pregnant or recently pregnant women, who are older, overweight and/or have pre-existing conditions such as diabetes and hypertension, are more vulnerable to experiencing severe COVID-19.

Evidence has shown that having these pre-existing conditions puts you at great risk, whether pregnant or not. Due to the many changes that occur in a woman's body during pregnancy, one could find themselves experiencing changes in the immune system and even contract respiratory infections.

That is why it is imperative to take all COVID-19 precautions, to protect both mom and baby from being infected.

## **What can I do to reduce my risk of catching COVID-19?**

Pregnant women should take the same precautions to avoid COVID-19 as other people such as:

- Frequently washing your hands with soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Avoid crowded spaces and close contact with sick people
- Wearing a mask every time you leave the house
- Avoid touching your eyes, mouth and nose.

## **Can COVID-19 be transferred from a woman to her unborn or newborn baby?**

The WHO hasn't been able to determine whether or not a pregnant woman can pass the virus onto her foetus or newborn during pregnancy or delivery. However, to date, no evidence has shown the virus being active in samples of breast milk or amniotic fluids.

## **Can I steam or take concoctions/home-made remedies while pregnant?**

Trying to fight off colds and flu while pregnant can prove to be quite tricky, as certain medicines cannot be taken by pregnant women as they could harm the baby. That is why it is always safer to lean towards the more natural route to

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fight off sore throats and blocked noses. It is always safe to consult with your local clinic or doctor on whether or not these methods will work for you.

Steaming – pregnant women can practice steam inhalation if they practice it safely to help with congestion, a few drops of essential oils might also be added to improve the process.

Natural concoctions – adding natural products such as honey, lemon, ginger and turmeric to water to make a natural concoction could assist in alleviating some flu or cold symptoms. Vitamin C is also known to help improve the immune system.

**I am pregnant and I have a fever and other flu-like symptoms, could it be COVID-19?**

If you are exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms you can go to your nearest health facility and get tested. The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health has isolation and quarantine sites open and ready for the public to use.

### The bottom line

You can protect yourself from COVID-19 by adhering to all the protocols and maintaining a healthy lifestyle by eating a

balanced diet, drinking lots of water, avoiding drinking and smoking at all costs and making sure that you get enough rest.

The public is also encouraged to make use of government resources and facilities by visiting your antenatal clinic or doctor regularly for check-ups and collecting and taking chronic medication.



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# LOVE YOUR BABY: DON'T DRINK WHILE PREGNANT

**Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders or FASD is the broad term used for all developmental abnormalities caused when a pregnant woman consumes alcohol.**

When an unborn developing baby or fetus is exposed to alcohol, the fetus can be affected within 20 minutes after the ingestion of alcohol. Alcohol affects all fetal tissue and organs, though the brain and the nervous system are the most vulnerable.

## Symptoms

After birth, the baby may present with a range of physical, neurological, behavioural and intellectual abnormalities that become more evident over time.

**In addition to intellectual deficits, an individual with FASD may present with the following:**

- Growth retardation (small for age before and after birth)
- Organ damage, especially the brain, eyes, ears and heart
- Abnormal facial features
- Brain damage, which result in lifelong challenges such as learning disability, interpersonal relationship problems, developmental disability such as fine motor development and coordination. In addition, most of

these children also present with attention and hyperactivity symptoms.

**In Adolescence an individual with FASD may present with additional challenges such as:**

- Poor performance in school
- Mental health- and substance abuse problems

The prevalence and extent of FASD is a worldwide challenge. Prevalence studies conducted by FARR (Foundation for Alcohol related Research) has shown that South Africa has the highest reported rate of FASD worldwide. It is 30 – 50 times more common than the next most common birth defect, namely Down syndrome.

## How much alcohol is safe to consume during pregnancy?

No amount of alcohol is safe to consume during pregnancy. Love your baby by preventing irreversible and permanent symptoms of FASD by restraining yourself from consuming alcohol.

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# WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT CANCER OF THE CERVIX

The month of September is also Gynaecological Cancer Awareness Month and brings into focus a number of cancers which affect women and their reproductive health.

The most common is the cancer of the cervix. Dr Neil Moran, Head of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at the KZN Department of Health, shares more on this disease.

## WHAT IS CANCER OF THE CERVIX?

Cancer of the cervix is a cancer that affects only women. The cervix is the lowest part of the uterus (the womb) and is located at the top of the vagina. It has a narrow opening which leads from the vagina up into the inside of the uterus.

During childbirth, the cervix opens up to allow the baby to come out from the uterus to be delivered through the vagina. After childbirth, the cervix gradually closes up again.

Health workers, including doctors and nurses, can look at a woman's cervix by using a special medical instrument called a speculum, which is inserted into the vagina to open it up; a light is then shone into the vagina, and the cervix can be seen at the top of the vagina.

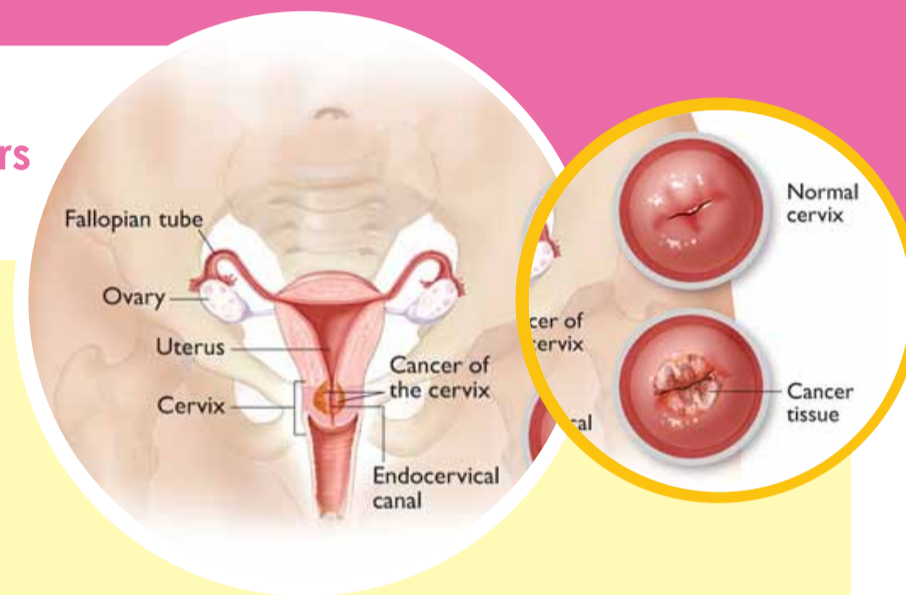
Cancer can occur in the cervix if abnormal cells develop there and start to invade surrounding structures.

## The woman who develops cancer may first notice symptoms such as:

- Pelvic pain that is unrelated to other conditions such as menstruation or physical exertion
- Pain during sexual intercourse
- Abnormal vaginal bleeding after sexual intercourse
- Heavy periods or heavy spotting between periods, or an additional period during the monthly cycle
- Any abnormal vaginal discharge, with or without an odour

The underlying cause for cancer of the cervix is infection of the cervix by a virus called the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV).

HPV infection of the cervix is very common and usually occurs through sexual transmission, often in young women who have recently started being sexually active without using condoms.



Although there is no specific treatment for HPV infection of the cervix, most women's immune system will naturally get rid of the HPV infection. In a small minority of cases, the HPV infection persists for years and can cause abnormal cells to develop in the cervix; eventually with persistent infection, these abnormal cells can turn into a cancer.

Any woman who has been infected with HPV can develop cancer of the cervix. However, women with a compromised immune system, such as those who are HIV infected, are at increased risk, and other factors such as smoking may also increase the risk.

## The Bad News

Cancer of the cervix is very common in South Africa, with thousands of women affected every year. It is the most common cause of cancer-related death in

South African women. Because the cancer is not visible from the outside, and involves a private area of the body, many cases of cancer of the cervix are only detected at a late stage when the cancer has already advanced too far to be cured.

In such cases, the cancer causes a lot of suffering for affected women and their families which may last for many months or even years. The woman may be in and out of hospital, receiving treatment for pain and bleeding, including blood transfusions, chemotherapy and radiotherapy.

Sadly, cancer of the cervix often results in a long, painful and undignified road to death.

## The Good News

Unlike many other cancers, almost all cases of cancer of the cervix can be

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prevented through various interventions. It is important for people to know about these interventions, so that women are supported in taking steps (in partnership with their local health services) to ensure that they avoid getting cancer of the cervix.

### • Vaccination against HPV infection

Vaccination against HPV infection for primary school girls (grade 4, aged 9 and above) is now offered by the Department of Health's School Health Programme at government schools and will protect these girls from getting infected by HPV in the future when they become sexually active.

If they are protected against HPV infection, then they won't get cancer of the cervix. Therefore parents are strongly advised to ensure that their girl children are vaccinated against HPV.

### • Healthy Lifestyle

Following safe sex practices, such as abstaining, using condoms, and avoiding multiple sexual partners will reduce the risk of acquiring sexually transmitted infections including HPV and HIV.

This will lead to a lower risk of cancer of the cervix. Stop smoking; this is good advice for prevention of cancer of the cervix and will have many other benefits. Those who are HIV infected must take anti-retroviral (ARV) medication regularly to suppress the virus and maintain a good immune system.

### • Cervical screening

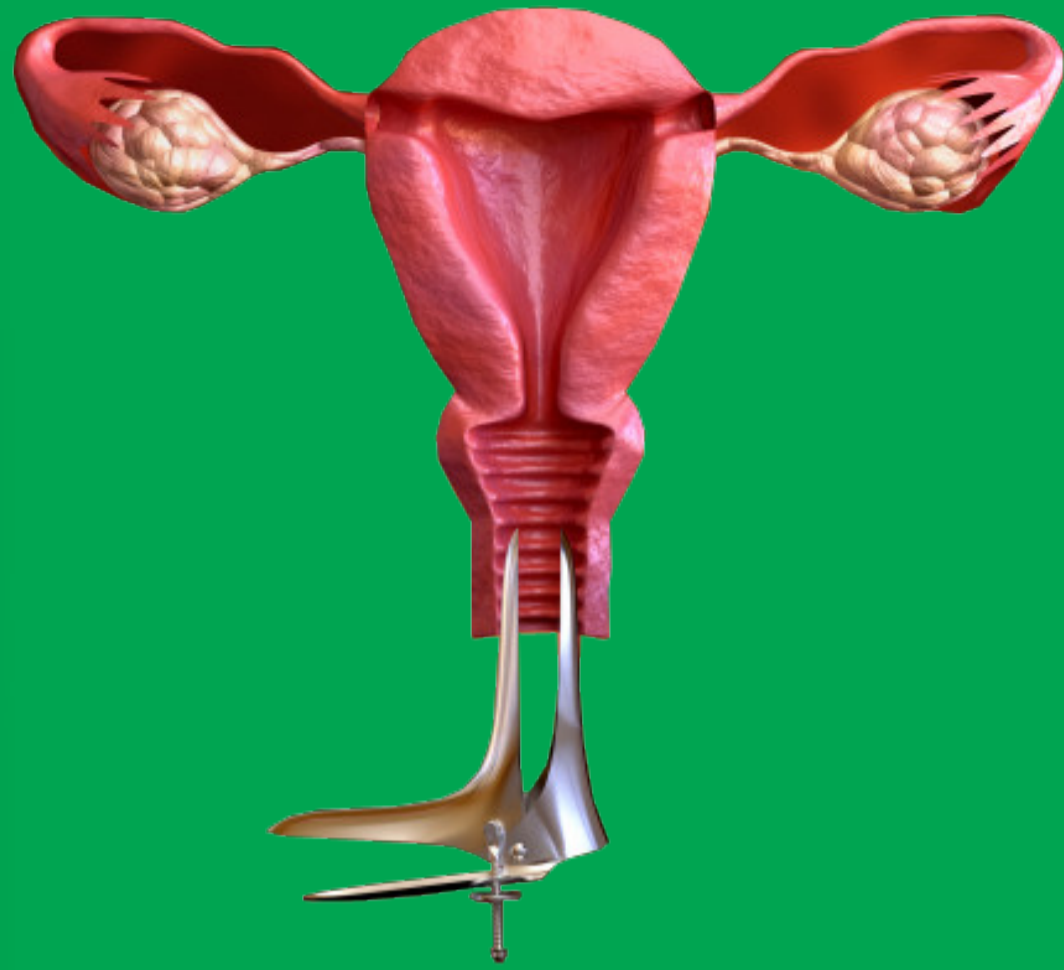
Even if a woman has already been infected by HPV and

has developed some abnormal cells in her cervix, it is not too late to take action and prevent progress to cancer of the cervix. This is because the change in the cervix from normal cells to abnormal cells to cancerous cells is a very gradual one which takes many years.

This fact provides an opportunity to detect the abnormal cells before they have become cancerous. This is done by a process called cervical screening. This is a process of checking for abnormal (pre-cancerous) cells in women who don't have any symptoms of cervical cancer.

In South Africa this usually done by a Pap Smear, where the health worker looks at the woman's cervix and uses a very small soft brush to lightly brush some cells from the cervix. These cells are collected and sent to the laboratory for analysis under a microscope. If abnormal cells are detected, then the woman must be called back for treatment.

The area of abnormal cells on the cervix can then be removed or destroyed by a small surgical procedure, which takes about 20 minutes. This prevents cancer of the cervix developing.



A Pap smear takes less than 5 minutes to do and can be done by a nurse at all public health clinics and community health centres.

### Pap smears are offered free of charge to all women in South Africa according to the following schedule:

- Any woman 30 years old or older. If normal, repeat every 10 years until the woman has passed 50 years old
- For HIV infected women, the first Pap smear should be done as soon as the HIV infection is diagnosed. If normal, repeat every 3 years for life
- Anytime if the woman has abnormal vaginal bleeding or discharge or genital ulcers and has not had a recent normal Pap smear within the past 6 months

All women can avoid getting cancer of the cervix if appropriate steps are taken. Our aim must be to eradicate cancer of the cervix from

South Africa in the same way that polio has now been eradicated from Africa.

**When did you last have a Pap smear?**

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# KIDNEY HEALTH FOR EVERYONE EVERYWHERE



**National Kidney Awareness Week, which runs from 7 to 11 September, was commemorated this week, to mainly raise awareness about kidneys and how to take care of them.**

The main objective is to highlight the growing burden of kidney disease, kidney-related health disparity, and inequity around the world.

Kidneys are organs in the body responsible for removal of waste. As any system, waste has to be removed to ensure the normal functioning of the body.

If the kidneys fail, waste accumulates in the body causing a disease called renal failure.

It manifests through many symptoms including: loss of appetite, tiredness, vomitus, and difficulty breathing that may lead to death.

At the last stage, to keep a person alive, a treatment called dialysis using a machine (haemodialysis), a special fluid (peritoneal dialysis), or operation called kidney transplantation could be used.

Acute dialysis treatment is currently available in Regional Hospitals such as Prince Mshiyeni Memorial, RK Khan, or Addington Hospital.

Kidney transplantation is only available at Inkosi Albert Luthuli Hospital.

**However, prevention is better than cure. In order to avoid kidney failure the following is encouraged:**

- Screen for kidney disease and manage it to avoid it worsening; that may lead to kidney failure
- Reduce salt intake
- Healthy eating (reduce sugar intake, increase fibre in diet)
- Avoid smoking
- Exercise regularly

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# LIVING WITH CHRONIC KIDNEY DISEASE

***My name is Sicelo Richman Sikhakhane, I am 28 years old. I am originally from Stanger. My condition started in 2016.***

It started with a heavy headache around October where I started losing my eyesight. In December I could barely see.

When I went to the clinic they found that my BP was extremely high. I was urgently sent to General Justice Gizenga Mpanza Regional Hospital where I got admitted.

The ultrasound results came out saying my kidneys were not looking good. It was then decided that I be sent to Inkosi Albert Luthuli Hospital's renal department where more tests were done and they found that I was on stage 4 renal failure.

They also discovered that at home we have a history of Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD). I was then put on the program and that went well.

After a year I was sick again and admitted, that's when they decided to start haemodialysis. That was in June 2018.

I underwent haemodialysis for 3 months before the doctors decided to move me to peritoneal dialysis which I'm still doing to date.

The hospital has been doing a good job when it comes to supplying my dialysis equipment. I always come on time.

I'm doing well and very healthy now. I would advise someone who's diagnosed with CKD is to be positive.

The best thing I did was to accept that my life is not going to be the same and if I want to survive I would have to work with the doctors, make sure I take my medication and follow my renal diet.



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# #qhudemaniKiniki JERUSALEM CHALLENGE IS HEATING UP: MAY THE BEST GROUP WIN



The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health has received over 60 entries for its Jerusalem Dance Challenge competition from health facilities across the province.

The challenge has now reached a new level as selection has begun at District level, meaning groups from the same District are now competing against one another. Entries are judged per Health District in order to choose one winner.

From Monday 07 September 2020 until Tuesday 22 September 2020, the dance challenge videos will be loaded on the Department's Facebook page per district and the video that will get most likes within that district will then be elevated to the provincial level for the second phase.

## FIRST PHASE

1. Monday 07 September 2020 Umkhanyakude District	10. Friday 18 September 2020 UGu District
2. Tuesday 08 September 2020 Zululand District	11. Monday 21 September 2020 EThekwini District
3. Wednesday 09 September 2020 Amajuba District	12. Tuesday 22 September 2020 Head Office
4. Thursday 10 September 2020 UMzinyathi District	
5. Friday 11 September 2020 UThukela District	
6. Monday 14 September 2020 King Cetshwayo District	
7. Tuesday 15 September 2020 UMgungundlovu District	
8. Wednesday 16 September 2020 ILembe District	

## SECOND PHASE

From Wednesday 23 September 2020 all the winning videos from each district, including Head Office, will be loaded on Facebook. Voting will then be open through the likes until Friday 25 September 2020.

The winning video will be posted of Facebook on Monday 28 September 2020. As ambassadors of the KZN Department of Health Jerusalem Challenge, on the week of 05-11 October 2020, the winning video or institution will be visited by a professional filming and camera crew to film a provincial professional video.

### SO FAR, THE WINNING DISTRICTS ARE:

BETHESDA SUB-CAMPUS  
FROM UMKHANYAKUDE DISTRICT

ITSHELEJUBA HOSPITAL  
FROM ZULULAND DISTRICT

MADADENI REGIONAL HOSPITAL  
FROM AMAJUBA DISTRICT

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# SPRING CLEAN YOUR BAD HABITS THIS SEPTEMBER

*With the spring season upon us, many decide to spring clean their homes, making sure that they are spick and span to welcome in the new season, while some take a less strenuous approach and decide to dress up in bright colourful clothes.*

Whatever your approach is to this new season and changes in temperature, we all have bad habits that we can dust off to enable us to make new and healthier ones moving forward.

**Here is a list of some of the bad habits that you might have and what you can do to improve on them:**

#### **Bad habit #1:** **Alcohol consumption**

With the days getting warmer and the braai season approaching, some might find it hard to completely remove alcohol

from their regular regimen. However, drinking moderately and responsibly is highly recommended, as it is associated with better physical and mental health.

#### **The fix:**

You could swap alcohol for water as a better and healthier alternative, as alcohol doesn't offer any nutritional value. However, some might say drinking water on its own is rather bland. To add a bit of flavour you could always opt for adding sliced fruit to your water such as lemons, strawberries, cucumbers and even mint leaves.

#### **Bad habit #2:** **Eating too much fast food**

Cooking your own meals takes a little bit more time and energy than it would to get takeaways, however, cooking for yourself ensures that you are taking control of what is going into your body, unlike with fast-food where there is a lot of

added preservatives and the very little nutrients present are lost.

#### **The fix:**

Spring comes in with seasonal fruits and vegetables that we can take advantage of while they're in season, such as plums, peaches, asparagus and celery to name a couple. Eating seasonally means we're eating more locally produced crops as it does not have to be imported or travel far, it can be harvested at its peak time.

This makes sure that all the nutrients are present and not lost during travel and sell for cheaper than it would have if it was not in season.

#### **Bad habit #3:** **Unhealthy lifestyle**

We all have bad habits, whether it be smoking, drinking, not staying active or eating too much sugar, the one thing that most bad

habits have in common is that they could be detrimental to our health.

#### **The fix:**

We could use this new season to ditch our bad habits and adopt new ones such as exercising, eating healthier, quitting drinking and smoking and cutting down on our sugar intake. It all sounds easier said than done, but it can be done through slow and gradual change.

Instead of taking on a 10km run, you could start by taking a 30-minute brisk walk around your neighborhood, making one meal a veggie-based meal or swapping your sugar intake in your coffee or tea with honey or other natural sweeteners.



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