



COVID-19 RESURGENCE: KZN HEALTH MEC SOUNDS ALARM BELLS AS NEW COVID-19 INFECTIONS BREACH RESURGENCE ALERT LINE



KwaZulu-Natal Health MEC Ms Nomagugu Simelane has sounded alarm bells following the observation of more than 1000 new COVID-19 cases since the beginning of April.

On Friday, 22 April 2022, the province recorded 1020 new cases, that shocking figure was followed by a slight decrease as cases were soaring at 923 new cases and the following day new cases were at 818.

It was the first time in months that such high numbers had been registered, and there are fears that this may be due to a mutation of the dominant Omicron variant.

MEC Simelane is also concerned at the concurrent increase in the number of ICU and high care admissions in the Province.

For a number of weeks, the

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Province had seen a fluctuating number of new cases. But there's been a noticeable jump over recently, with the seven-day moving average increasing from 228 to 511 per day.

With a record of more than 1000 new cases during this reporting period, it is clear that the Province's resurgence monitoring threshold has been triggered.

MEC Simelane explains: "In terms of our emergency early warning systems, a 10% increase in cases over a 7 day moving average will trigger an alert; while a 20% increase in cases over a 7 day moving average, which is what we've seen, may trigger resurgence.

"So, indeed, these latest statistics are of huge concern to us. Clearly, something is happening. At this stage, we're not sure whether this is the Fifth wave or not, but these developments are cause for concern.

That is why we are urging all the people of this province to stay alert, and to practice all the necessary precautions, such as wearing face masks, maintaining social distancing, and washing their hands regularly with soap and water or hand sanitiser."

No fewer than 16 074 people

have lost their lives due to COVID-19 in KwaZulu-Natal, and MEC Simelane has again reiterated the need for people to get vaccinated against COVID-19, so as to strengthen their bodies and also protect those around them in case of infection.

The Province has so far fully vaccinated 2,746 million people, with a total of 4,4 million yet to get even a single jab. MEC Simelane said: "We are pleading with those who have not been vaccinated to come forward and get the jab.

This is for their own good, because people who are not vaccinated are more likely to be infected with COVID-19, and more likely to transmit COVID-19 to others.

They are also at a much higher risk of dying from the infection compared to vaccinated people. "Also, when infected, they can be more infectious and get sick for a longer periods of time.

"We therefore wish to urge them to consider the potential risks that they are putting themselves and their loved ones in - especially our elderly, and those with hypertension, diabetes and other chronic medical conditions - and get vaccinated.

"Individuals who have these underlying ailments remain at higher risk even after

vaccinating when exposed and infected with COVID-19. They are more at risk of severe infection, which may require hospitalization, or result in death due to the infection."

MEC Simelane also took the opportunity to once again dispel some of the misconceptions and myths about the safety of vaccines, which are believed to be making many people hesitant to take the jab.

"We wish to assure all the people of this country that COVID-19 vaccines have undergone rigorous scientific testing which has shown that they are, indeed, safe for use.

"They have undergone unprecedented scientific collaborations, which have allowed research, development, and authorizations to be completed in record time - to meet the urgent need for these vaccines while maintaining high safety standards.

"We therefore urge anyone who experiences side effects after vaccination that is outside of what is expected - that is, pain at the injection site, fever, muscle aches - to please report by calling our toll free line on 0800 029 999 or log into the SAHPRA med safety App."

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COVID-19 STATISTICS IN KZN

				
675 515	10 629	648 669	16 079	1 360
POSITIVE CASES IDENTIFIED	ACTIVE CASES	RECOVERIES	DEATHS	NEW CASES

SATURDAY
30
APRIL
2022

Learn more to
Be READY
for #COVID19:
www.sacoronavirus.co.za

Covid-19 public hotline:
0800 029 999
WhatsApp 'Hi' to
0600 123 456

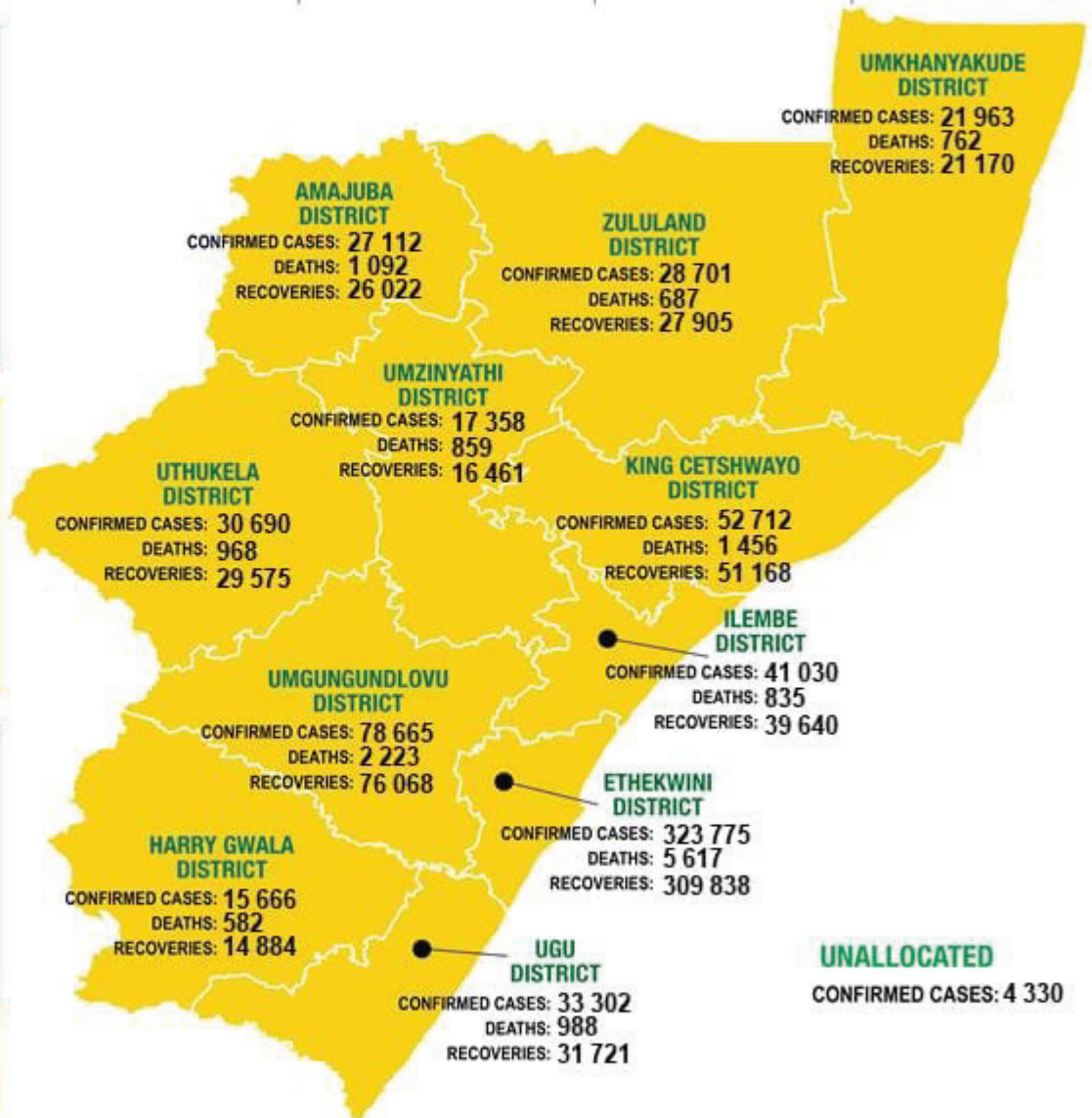
DOWNLOAD the COVID Alert SA app

The COVID Alert SA app can notify you if you have been exposed to another app user with coronavirus. Download it now to protect yourself and others



Available on the
App Store

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STILL, WE RISE

KZN'S COURAGEOUS RESPONSE TO THE DEADLY FLOODS



The torrential rains that have ravaged parts of KwaZulu-Natal, leaving almost 400 people dead and thousands homeless, have also caused substantial damage to a number of health care facilities.

At least 84 healthcare facilities eThekweni, iLembe, Ugu, Umgungundlovu, and King Cetshwayo districts were severely affected by the floods – with most buildings suffering damage their roof, floors and fencing. The repair work will cost at least R184 million.

“We can also confirm that our hospitals and clinics have, indeed, been seeing a higher number of trauma and emergency patients than usual – particularly in the densely-populated districts.

“We are cognisant of the criticality of water availability within a healthcare setting. That is why all emergency theatre cases are swiftly being discussed with neighbouring hospitals and diverted accordingly,” said KZN Health MEC Ms Nomagugu Simelane.

Due to the shortage of water and related sanitation challenges, environmental health practitioners are monitoring clinical statistics for

early identification of any water-borne or diarrheal diseases. This includes the inspection of potable water that is being transported by tankers, and in halls where displaced members of the community are being housed.

The Department has also activated a contingency plan to alleviate the shortage of water through the provision of water tankers and usage of boreholes.

MEC Simelane added: “We would like to take this opportunity to thank our healthcare workers across the spectrum for continuing to come to work - despite serious challenges - and responding to the unfolding emergency with incredible courage and diligence.

“From nurses and doctors and allied health workers to Emergency Medical Services and Forensic Pathology Services, and support services, so many of our staff have put in extra hours to attend to the injured and minimise human suffering.

We are aware that many of them also went well and truly beyond the call of duty, and actively got involved in mop-up operations. All of these are acts of heroism.”

Damage to critical infrastructure such as roads, water and power supply systems continues to pose further

challenges to the restoration of normal operations at some of these healthcare facilities. But various spheres of Government are working together to rebuild the damaged infrastructure.

“We are working very hard mitigate the impact of this extraordinary situation, and are in constant engagement with other departments and municipalities, and inviting their further intervention where applicable.

“We have also put in place contingency measures - including beefing up the number of pathologists - in order to speed up the processing and completion of post mortems. This will help avoid backlogs, while accommodating the potential intake of more bodies.

We have completed the vast majority of post-mortems, and we are urging those who have missing relatives to go contact their nearest police stations, and request assistance with the identification of bodies at our Medico-Legal Mortuaries.

“We are also aware of the psychological effects of exposure to such high levels of trauma, and we are urging those who require counselling to seek help from the KZN Department of Social Development.”

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NEW (FINANCIAL) YEAR, NEW ME!!! RAISING THE BAR AS WE START THE NEW FINANCIAL YEAR 2022/23

New Financial Year! New Leaf! New Targets! Better Outcomes!!

This month (April) we turn a new leaf and mark the start of the new Financial Year 2022/23 in the Public Service Sector. This is a critical period to put our plans into action and advance our work towards the realisation of Departmental targets and outcomes.

The Departmental quest to deliver on its Strategic Impact: ***Increased Life Expectancy” and Outcomes; Universal Health Coverage, Improved client experience of Care and Reduced Morbidity and Mortality”***, demand all of us to seriously reflect on our individual and collective roles.

We therefore call upon all employees of the Department and more importantly clinical staff across all levels of healthcare service delivery to raise the bar when discharging their responsibilities, and serve the public with determination and diligence.

The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health (KZN DOH) is the second-largest in the province, and is tasked with a critical responsibility of providing quality healthcare services to all people of KwaZulu-Natal. The vision to “achieve optimal health for all people of KwaZulu-Natal” demands of all of us to spare no effort in fulfilling our responsibilities.

Our Vision and Mission statements should resonate with each individual employee, wherever they are placed in the Department. We have our work cut out with clear goals and targets as set out in 2022/23 Annual Performance Plan (APP).

We therefore need to double our efforts to achieve these set targets so that we can ultimately improve service delivery.

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I also want to convey my sincere gratitude for the work that has been done in the past financial year, despite the complex challenges that we faced with battling the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as social unrest in last July. The Department dealt with some serious challenges in the past financial year, yet we managed to prevail. Many thanks for the contribution you made to ensure the continued functionality of our public health system.

Now we are reeling from the ripple effects of the devastating floods in our province. We are once again called upon to be a beacon of hope for our communities and nurse the injured back to health.

Important reasons to know about your employer's financial year

There are several reasons you should know your employer's financial year and you might be wondering why, but it is surely in your best interests to know about your work employment opportunities, issues concerning salary increases, promotions and so forth.

The South African Government's financial year, including its Departments - national and provincial - stretches from 1 April to 31 March of the following year and it is the time that Government and companies use for planning, financial reporting and budgeting for the purpose of ensuring that business is conducted properly and in line with set targets.

Knowing your employer's financial year is very beneficial for you as an employee, so that you are able to plan ahead, and to know about your own future plans.

This period also prepares you as an employee to set your own goals and or targets, knowing where you stand at work and in your livelihood.

What is a financial year?

An organization or company uses its financial year to track accounting, reporting, forecasting and budgeting. This 12-month period can begin in any month but it usually coincides with the beginning of a quarter, such as January, April, July or October and it does not need to coincide with a regular calendar year, which runs from January through December. There is no difference between a fiscal year and a financial year, except that the term "fiscal year" is often used to refer to a business accounting period rather than finances overall.

At the end of a financial year, your organisation may perform a wide range of tasks to close the previous year and make plans for the upcoming one.

Why is it important to know your company's financial year?

Preparing for a performance review

This is the time when the employers review the employees' work performance and salaries. And, if you know about this, you can adequately prepare yourself to make a good impression on your boss during your performance review.

Assessing job security

As an employee, you should be interested in knowing how your organisation performed, or whether it reached its goals in a financial year. If your organisation had a strong financial year, you will likely feel secure in your job and have a positive outlook for the coming year.

Preparing for next year

At the beginning of a new financial year, your boss may announce the organisation's plans and goals for the next 12 months. This allows you to make the necessary preparations to adapt to these changes and perform better in the new year.

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KZN HEALTH MEC'S WORLD AUTISM DAY PLEA:

“PARTNER WITH US, IMPROVE YOUR HEALTH LITERACY AND UNDERSTANDING, AND MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE FOR THOSE LIVING WITH AUTISM AND OTHER HEALTH DISORDERS.”



KwaZulu-Natal Health MEC Ms Nomagugu Simelane is asking citizens to take the time to learn about diseases and disorders such as Autism, so that those who suffer from them can receive support rather than be subjected to stigma and discrimination.

MEC Simelane made the plea as World Autism Awareness Day was commemorated globally on the 2nd of April 2022, under the theme ***'Inclusive Quality Education for All.'***

Autism, also known as Autism Spectrum Disorder, is described as a developmental disorder that affects people's ability to behave, interact, and learn in ways that are different from those considered "normal."

While some people with autism can live independently, others may have severe disabilities and require life-long care and support. Autism often has an impact on their education and employment opportunities.

It is said that autism accounts for 1 to 2 % of the global population. However, due to lack of awareness, many cases of autism may go undiagnosed and data about them may not always be precise.

MEC Simelane says: "Autism, especially among Black people, may be regarded as a 'new' disorder, when the truth is that it actually isn't.

It's just that there hasn't been enough awareness about it. For a very long time, children with disorders such as autism were wrongly- 'diagnosed' at home and miscategorised.

"They would then be referred to as 'sick in the head' or 'slow'... It is therefore very, very important that as a society, we educate ourselves about them.

"As the KZN Department of Health, we are very serious about going into communities to conduct health promotion, and educate people so

that we can improve their awareness about diseases.

"Matters of health are societal in nature and character. It is therefore critical that we partner with our communities.

We have a responsibility to talk to them about all diseases, including new ones such as COVID-19, and not-so-new ones such as autism and many others, which many people have not generally been aware of.

"So, it's extremely important that communities consume this information, because knowledge is power.

When you are well-informed, you can take better decisions, which can lead you to a healthier and better life."

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According to the Centres for Disease Control, some of the social communication and interaction characteristics of people living with autism may include:

- Avoiding or not keeping eye contact
- A child not responding to their name by 9 months of age
- Not displaying facial expressions like happy, sad, angry, and surprised by 9 months of age
- Not playing simple interactive games
- Using only a few or no gestures by 12 months of age
- Not sharing interests with others by 15 months of age
- Not pointing to show their parents something interesting by 18 months of age
- Not pretending to be something else, like a teacher or superhero, during play by 48 months of age
- Not singing, dancing, or acting for their parents by 60 months of age.

Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder may also exhibit restricted or repetitive behaviours or interests, such as:

- Lining up toys or other objects and getting upset when order is changed
- Repeating words or phrases over and over (called echolalia)
- Playing with toys the same way every time
- Focusing on parts of objects (for example, wheels)
- Getting upset by minor changes
- Having obsessive interests
- Following certain routines
- Flapping hands, rocking the body, or spinning themselves in circles
- Having unusual reactions to the way things sound, smell, taste, look, or feel.

MEC Simelane says: “Parents or guardians whose children show any of the above symptoms are urged to visit their nearest Primary Health Care clinic, where their children will be assessed. Depending on the severity of the condition, they will then be referred to the appropriate higher level of care.”



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HEAL THE WORLD, MAKE IT A BETTER PLACE

Our Planet, Our Health - World Health Day

The 7th of April since 1948 has been reserved by the World Health Organization (WHO) as World Health Day.

Each year it draws attention to a specific health topic that is of concern to people all over the world. This year's theme is 'Our planet, our health'. The WHO's premise for this year's theme is that we only have one planet, and that our health depends on it, the same way it's health depends on us.

A lot of the things we do have negative environmental impacts, such as littering/pollution, burning waste and fossil fuels, overfishing, deforestation and depleting the ozone layer, to name a few.

Careless disposal of waste has a number of detrimental effects, including blockage to storm water drainage systems, which may exacerbate the impact of flooding.

The WHO reports that 13 people die every minute globally from diseases such as lung cancer, heart disease and strokes that are caused by air pollution.

Occasions such as World Health Day therefore aim to challenge us to re-imagine our health, society and economy, and remind us that we only

have one planet, which we must take better care of - because we need it as much as it needs us.

Here are some new habits that you could adopt to protect the environment, and ultimately your own health:

- **Educate** - educate yourself on the environmental and health impacts that the food and products we consume have on the planet, as this will help you understand the importance and value of natural resources and how to use them more sustainably.
- **Meat-free Mondays** - dedicating a Monday or at least one day of the week to consuming a meal that does not contain meat. This is a great initiative as it will help you take on a healthier diet, while saving animals and the planet.
- **Conserve water** - water is vital for our survival, most of the medicine we take needs water. If we don't conserve the water we have today, we might not have water in the future; therefore it is important to save water as much as possible.

Practical ways include:

- Fixing broken taps
- Taking shorter showers
- Turning off water while brushing teeth/shaving
- Using a bucket of water to wash your car instead of a hosepipe.
- Switching off - get into the habit of switching off anything that is not in use, such as lights, television, computers and pool pumps. Also unplugging devices whenever possible.

WHO estimates that more than 13 million deaths around the world each year are due to avoidable environmental causes. By adopting the above-mentioned interventions, you are helping yourself and the environment from deteriorating even more.

Let's continue to build cities that are liveable, and where people have control over their health and the health of the planet.

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PERSONAL HYGIENE HABITS TO PRACTICE IN YOUR DAILY LIFE

Practicing good personal hygiene is important for helping keep the body healthy and clean.

Personal hygiene is an important form of behaviour that must be practised in daily life, starting from morning to sleep time to protect our health.

To protect one's health, the body, hair, mouth, and teeth must be cleaned on a daily basis, and clothes must be washed frequently.

The body provides an excellent habitat for germs to flourish in persons who have inadequate personal hygiene, making them vulnerable to infection. On a social level, people may avoid a person with poor personal hygiene, which may result in isolation and loneliness.

What is personal hygiene?

Personal hygiene is how you care for your body. This practice includes bathing, washing your hands, brushing your teeth, and more. Every day, millions of bacteria and viruses from the outside world

come into contact with you. They can stay on your body for a long time and, in some cases, make you sick.

According to the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), many diseases and conditions can be prevented or controlled through appropriate personal hygiene and by frequently washing parts of the body and hair with soap and clean, running water (if available).

PERSONAL HYGIENE INCLUDES:

- cleaning your body every day
- washing your hands with soap after going to the toilet
- brushing your teeth twice a day
- covering your mouth and nose with a tissue (or your sleeve) when sneezing or coughing
- washing your hands after handling pets and other animals

Teaching children hygiene

Parents and caregivers should teach children how to keep themselves clean from a young age. Encouraging children to help clean themselves as soon as they get old is a good way to inculcate a strong personal hygiene regimen.



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WORLD MALARIA DAY 2022: HOW TO WARD OFF THOSE POTENTIALLY DEADLY MOSQUITO BITES

Every year on April 25, the Department of Health in KwaZulu-Natal joins the world in commemorating World Malaria Day. We do so because malaria continues to be a primary cause of preventable illness and death worldwide.



According to the World Health Organization's latest malaria report, there were 241 million cases of malaria in 2020 compared to 227 million cases in 2019, which is extremely worrying.

What is Malaria?

Malaria is a life-threatening and contagious disease (spread from one person to another). It is transmittable through the bite of an infected Anopheles female mosquito.

When this mosquito bites a person, the parasite is released into the bloodstream. The severity of malaria varies based on the type of malaria parasite species.

There are four kinds of malaria parasites that can infect humans:

- Plasmodium Vivax
- Plasmodium Ovale
- Plasmodium Malariae
- Plasmodium Falciparum

How does it spread?

- By insects bites
- By blood products (contaminated needles or unscreened blood)

What can travellers do to prevent malaria?

- Wear long-sleeved clothing to cover the skin
- Use mosquito repellent
- Put screens on windows and doors
- Use of long-lasting insecticides spraying in homestead and buildings
- Elimination of mosquito breeding places
- Know the symptoms of malaria
- Keep home clean

According to the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, travellers can protect themselves from malaria by taking prescription medicine and preventing mosquito bites. There is no malaria vaccine.

Take Malaria Medicine

Check your destination to see if you should take prescription malaria medication. Depending on the medicine you take, you will need to start taking this medicine multiple days before your trip, as well as during and after your trip.

Talk to your doctor about the type of medication you need to take.

Travelers should take the following steps to prevent mosquito bites:

- Stay and sleep in screened or air-conditioned rooms.
- Use a bed net if the area where you are sleeping is exposed to the outdoors.
- Cover exposed skin by wearing long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and hats.
- Use EPA-registered insect repellents with one of the

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following active ingredients: DEET, picaridin, IR3535, oil of lemon eucalyptus (OLE), para-menthane-diol (PMD), or 2-undecanone.

Treatment

Malaria is treatable with prescription drugs to kill the parasite.

The types of drugs and length of treatment will vary depending on:

- Which type of malaria parasite a person have
- The severity of symptoms
- The age and weight
- Whether the person is pregnant

Drugs

- Coartem
- Artesunate
- The treatment is available in clinics and hospitals

Hot spot areas

- Malaria occurs in the low altitude areas in the far northern parts of KwaZulu-Natal

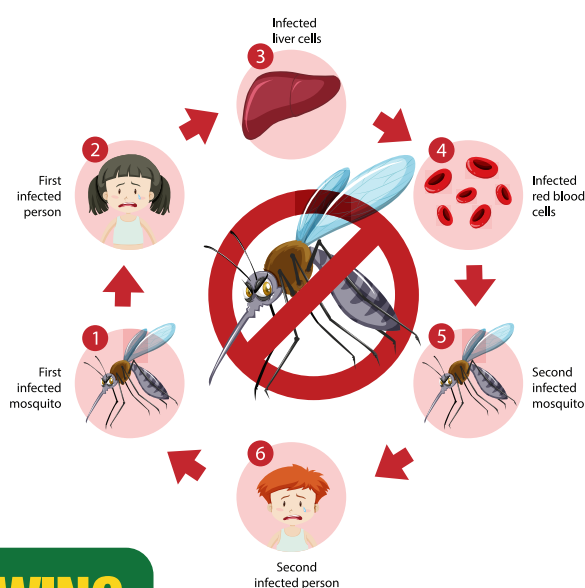
Endemic Districts

1. UMkhanyakude: Jozini Local Municipality and UMhlabuyalingana Local Municipality
2. Zululand: Pongola Local Municipality

Symptoms of malaria:

- Shaking chills
- High fever
- Profuse sweating
- Headache
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Abdominal pain
- Diarrhoea
- Muscle pain

MALARIA TRANSMISSION CYCLE



SYMPTOMS OF MALARIA



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Vaccinated communities, Healthy communities - African Vaccination Week



As everyone in the world right now might have heard a lot about vaccinating against COVID-19 and others being reluctant to take a jab against the virus, we would like to remind everyone that vaccines have been around for a very long time. They have protected us against many diseases, and for this, it is extremely important that we shine the spotlight on African Vaccination Week this month.

African Vaccination Week, which starts from 24 to 30 April in conjunction with World Immunisation Week, is an opportunity to emphasise the importance of immunisation in saving lives, and to

encourage families to vaccinate their children against deadly but preventable diseases.

Throughout history, humans have successfully developed vaccines for a number of life-threatening diseases, including meningitis, tetanus, measles and wild poliovirus. According to the World Health Organisation, in the early 1900s,

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polio was a worldwide disease, paralysing hundreds of thousands of people every year. By 1950, two effective vaccines against the disease had been developed. But vaccination in some parts of the world was still not common enough to stop the spread of polio, particularly in Africa.

In the 1980s, a united worldwide effort to eradicate polio from the planet began. Over many years and several decades, polio vaccination, using routine immunization visits and mass vaccination campaigns, has taken place in all continents.

Millions of people, mostly children, have been vaccinated and in August 2020, the African continent was certified wild poliovirus free, joining all other parts of the world except Pakistan and Afghanistan, where polio has not yet been eradicated.

Through its convening power, the WHO works with countries across the globe to raise awareness of the value of vaccines and immunisation and ensures that governments obtain the necessary guidance and technical support to implement high quality immunisation programmes.

This worldwide collaboration provides an opportunity to boost momentum and focus on specific actions such as raising awareness on how immunisation saves lives; increasing vaccination coverage to prevent disease outbreaks; and reaching underserved and marginalised communities.

When someone is vaccinated, they are very likely to be protected against the targeted disease. But not everyone can be vaccinated. People with underlying health conditions that weaken their immune systems

(such as cancer or HIV) or who have severe allergies to some vaccine components may not be able to get vaccinated with certain vaccines.

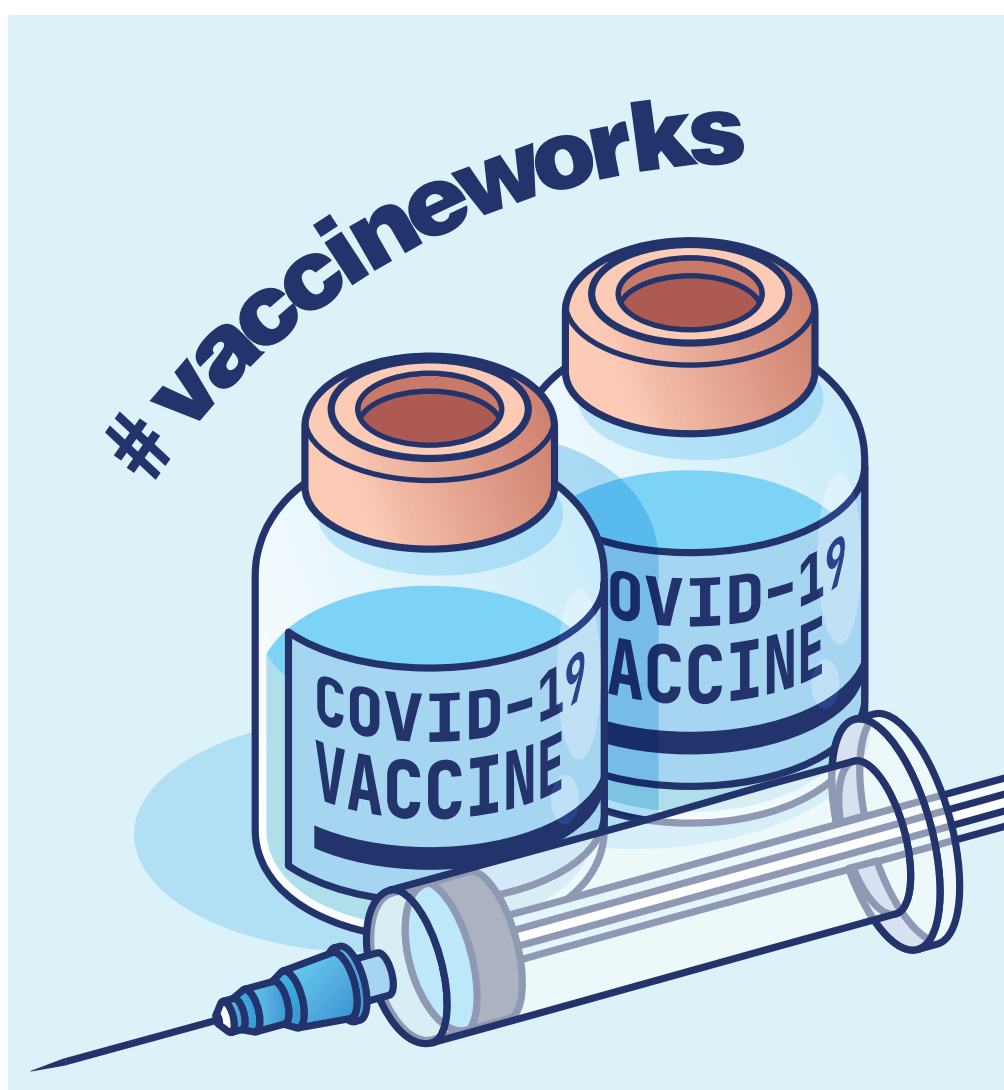
These people can still be protected if they live in and among others who are vaccinated. When a lot of people in a community are vaccinated, the pathogen (a bacterium, virus, or other microorganism that can cause disease) has a hard time circulating because most of the people it encounters are immune.

So the more that others are vaccinated, the less likely people who are unable to be protected by vaccines are at risk of even being exposed to the harmful pathogens. This is called herd immunity, a term that has become more common with the current fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

This is especially important for those people who not only can't be vaccinated but may be more susceptible to the diseases we vaccinate against. No single vaccine provides 100% protection, and herd immunity does not provide full protection to those who cannot safely be vaccinated.

But with population immunity, these people will have substantial protection, thanks to those around them being vaccinated.

Vaccinating not only protects yourself, but also protects those in the community who are unable to be vaccinated.



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