

# HEALTH MATTERS **FREE**

# Ezempilo

EDUCATE || INFORM || EMPOWER EDITION 4 • 2012

Healthy Choices For Healthy Pressure:

**REDUCE THE SALT!**

**Winter Fires:  
Watch the paraffin!**

**Pregnancy:  
ARE YOU AT RISK?**



health

Department:  
Health  
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

# STAY WARM THIS WINTER, BUT PREVENT FIRE DAMAGE



## PARAFFIN SAFETY

- Always handle paraffin with extreme care, as it is poisonous and can burn your skin even if unlit. Paraffin is often sold in containers contaminated with chemicals such as petrol, or mixed with methylated spirits. This can cause it to flare dangerously or even explode
- Paraffin can cause severe burns, and paraffin stoves that are knocked over or explode are a major cause of injuries and fires in informal settlements.
- Never leave a paraffin appliance unattended. It only takes a second for wind or child to it knock over
- Do not put a cloth under a paraffin appliance - a child could pull it starting a fire
- Always have a bucket of sand nearby when using a paraffin appliance. Water will not extinguish a paraffin fire and can spread the flames!



health

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**PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL**

**Fighting Disease, Fighting Poverty, Giving Hope**

# Message from KZN Health HOD Dr Sibongile Zungu



## **Turning around health care: one facility at a time**

Healthcare delivery is going through a watershed moment in our country's history. When thousands of people convened in August 1955 to put to paper their vision of an alternate society based on equality in every sector, many thought this would never become a reality. It is therefore poignant to note that last month saw the first pilot phase which is the start of the realisation of that vision of an equitable health system. KZN in particular has been the ugly sibling of health stats in this country for far too long, with a high burden of diseases and demand bursting at the seams. We have a long way to go and there are still many more mountains to climb. However, despite this, we can celebrate the milestone of reaching the first mountain top. We have many achievements to be proud of, to inspire and propel us as health care providers to continue with the journey until we have reached our destination: the creation of a preventive health scheme that is free, equitable and one that provides special care for mothers and young children.

To achieve this takes will, patience and unwavering determination to make it happen – against all odds and in spite of all the challenges and many obstacles that lie ahead. Despite our constrained resources, budget restrictions and skills shortages, as KZN Health we remain committed to the ideals of a better life for all. The Department remains committed to using resources efficiently and cost effectively through the building of more clinics which will reduce the burden on our hospitals and empower communities to work together to promote prevention of diseases. We will also expand on mobile clinics as these provide comprehensive care especially in rural areas where the terrain poses a challenge for the establishment of clinics and hospitals due to the lack of infrastructure and bulk services. We will not sit back simply because some people are living in areas that are inaccessible. Preventive health is primary health care, and is all about going to the community. Let's make it happen!

# INSIDE APRIL 2012

- **PREGNANCY: ARE YOU AT RISK?**
- **CONSTIPATION: SIGNS AND TREATMENT**
- **RISE IN CHILDHOOD CANCER**
- **KZN HEALTH NEWS**
- **DANGERS OF PARAFFIN**
- **COMIC**
- **AWARENESS DAYS**



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## SAY NO TO SUGAR-DADDIES!



Monthly Guide to:

# CONSTIPATION

**“I had never experienced so much pain and irritation each time I go to the toilet until I fell pregnant. Sometimes I end up crying before I even go to the toilet knowing what I have to go through. I don’t talk about it because I am so embarrassed so I am always suffering in silence.”** These are the words of Tholakele Mhkize, a pregnant woman who like so many others, continue to suffer with constipation. But, it doesn’t have to be that way, it is simple and easy to treat, so let your clinic know and they will give you all the advice you need.

## **SOME CAUSES OF CONSTIPATION:**

- Drinking less water and liquids
- Lack of fibre in diet like vegetables
- Lack of exercise resulting in overweight
- Eating large amounts of dairy products like milk and cheese
- Stress and depression
- Eating disorders

- Colon cancer
- Side effects of some medication
- Pregnancy as the unborn baby puts weight on the mother

## **CONSTIPATION IS EASIER TO PREVENT THAN TO TREAT!**

Exercise regularly, drink plenty of water and have a diet rich in fibre (beans, fruit, vegetables are some) to help with bowel movements – and eating less processed foods like fast foods!

## **When do you know it is really constipation?**

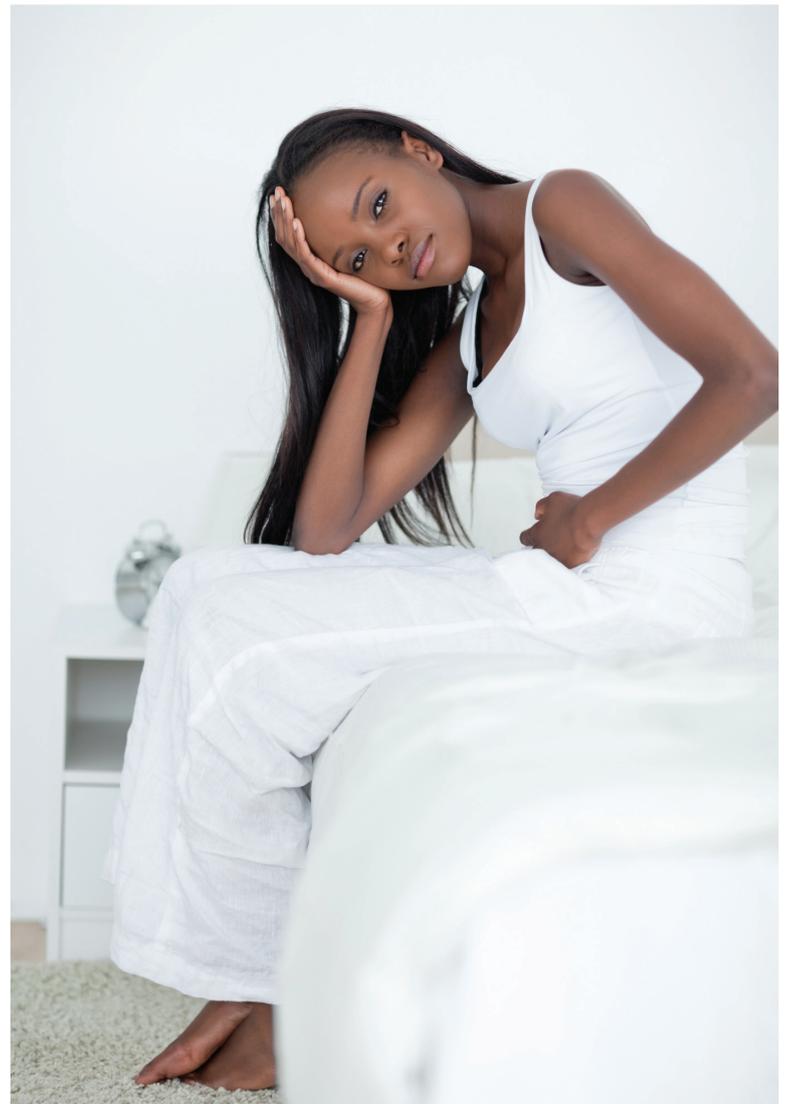
When one goes for more than three days without being able to relieve yourself in the toilet, this is usually called constipation. In pregnant women like Tholakele, the baby puts a lot of pressure on the body which sometimes makes it difficult for a woman to relieve themselves with ease.

## **So is constipation a disease?**

No, it’s a condition that’s common among most people especially pregnant women and the elderly.

## **Signs of constipation**

- Inability to go to the toilet often, or going to the toilet less than three times a week
- Passing hard and painful stools
- A swollen stomach; tummy pains or painful haemorrhoids with vomiting at times.



Focus on:

# PREGNANCY RISKS!



**Pregnancy can be a time of joy, celebration or worry if it is unplanned. It's also a time when as a mother to be, you need to be aware of any risks to you or your baby's health. Keep this handy guide for warning signs of dangers so that you know when to contact your midwife or clinic immediately:**

## **Ectopic Pregnancy**

A fertilized egg normally plants itself in the uterus of a woman (the part of a woman's body responsible for reproduction). When the fertilized egg plants itself outside the uterus, then we call it an ectopic pregnancy. Usually this happens in the Fallopian tube. As the baby grows in tube, this can cause severe cramps on the side of the tummy,

or a sharp pain the shoulder. See your clinic immediately if this happens as the tube could burst causing serious internal bleeding.

## **Miscarriage**

It's common to lose some blood in the first fourteen weeks of your pregnancy.

However if there is a heavy loss of blood, with

blood clots, and you have low backache, you could be at risk of miscarriage.

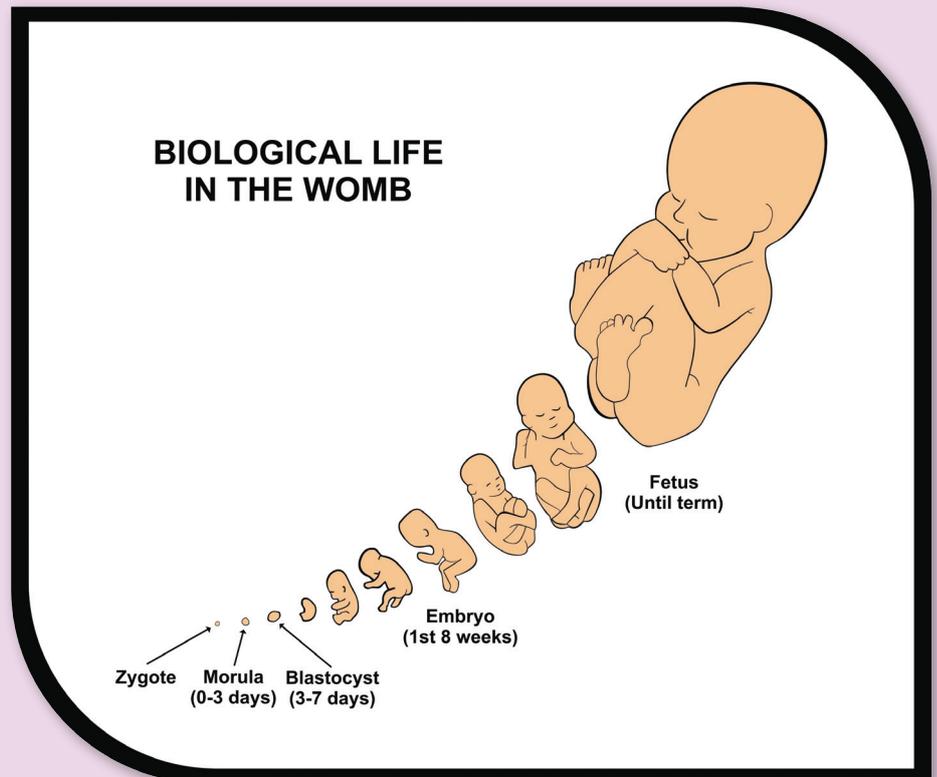
Often miscarriages happen because there is something wrong with the baby or in some cases the baby dies in the uterus, but has not come out of the body. You may feel that something is not right or that the baby is no longer moving. If your clinic confirms you have miscarried, they may need to operate to remove the baby.

A miscarriage can be very difficult to accept especially when you planned the pregnancy. Speak to your health worker about counseling and speak to someone you can trust to help you deal with the emotions. Your body should take between four to six weeks to return to normal, while the emotional healing takes longer.

## Placenta Praevia

• The placenta is an organ that is attached to the lining of the womb during pregnancy. It keeps your unborn baby's blood supply separate from your own. Sometimes, the placenta is so low down that it covers the cervix (the part of a woman's body which opens up during labour to allow the baby to be delivered). If this happens, it can lead to serious bleeding during pregnancy and the baby will need to be delivered by Caesarean. The bleeding associated with placenta praevia is bright red and painless, and can be very heavy. It generally stops and then starts again. If you have a bleed, you might be

admitted to hospital for the rest of your pregnancy, or you might be able to go home if you live near the hospital. You will have to take it very easy and avoid sex.



## What to watch for:

### Bleeding before 20 weeks:

If only a small amount - you should be fine but mention this to the health worker.

If you are passing clots and the bleeding is heavy - consult your clinic immediately as this could be miscarriage.

If it is dark brown in colour and like water - let your clinic know as it could be an ectopic pregnancy.

### Bleeding after 20 weeks:

Bleeding towards the end of your pregnancy - This may be the start of your labour, go to hospital immediately.

### Itching on your lower stomach:

This is caused by your skin stretching and is common especially towards the end of your pregnancy. Use some Vaseline or cream without chemicals to ease the itch.

Itching on the palms of your hands /feet or all over your body:

Contact your clinic as this could be a sign of a problem with your liver.

### REMEMBER!

**EARLY BOOKING SAVES LIVES. CONTACT YOUR CLINIC AS SOON AS YOU KNOW YOU ARE PREGNANT. IT IS POSSIBLE TO HAVE A HEALTHY BABY, EVEN IF YOU ARE HIV POSITIVE.**

# PRESSURE

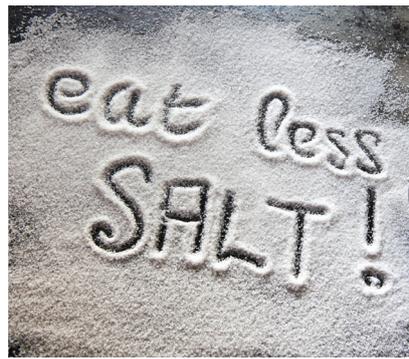
**WHY ARE SO MANY PEOPLE SUFFERING FROM HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE?**

## **It's very worrying. High blood pressure is very common among South Africans.**

It's easy to blame our parents for some of the risk since high blood pressure is partly something we inherit from our genes, meaning it's passed down the family. However, that's not the main reason. Our lifestyle and eating habits play an important role in determining our blood pressure. That's why KZN MEC Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo continues to place emphasis on healthy eating and exercise. It's the most important way we can work towards maintaining good health and blood pressure at the right level. Being overweight puts you at a high risk of developing high blood pressure, so follow the following guides to keep your body healthy and your pressure in control:

## **Salt is a direct cause of high blood pressure**

While tiny amounts of table salt are needed for your health, South Africans eat almost three times the recommended amount every day. Adults only need about one teaspoon of salt every day. Too much of salt puts a strain on the kidneys which can trigger high blood pressure.



## **Give up smoking!**

Smoking has so many bad effects on the body. Not only does smoking lead to high blood pressure, but it also increases your risk of heart attacks and strokes. Why take the chance? Give it up today and increase your chance of a longer, healthier life.

## **Alcohol raises your blood pressure**

You don't have to be an alcoholic for alcohol to be ruining your health. Drinking more than the recommended maximum amount is not only harmful to your pocket and waist, it can double your chances of developing high blood pressure.

## **Pregnant? Go for regular check-ups!**

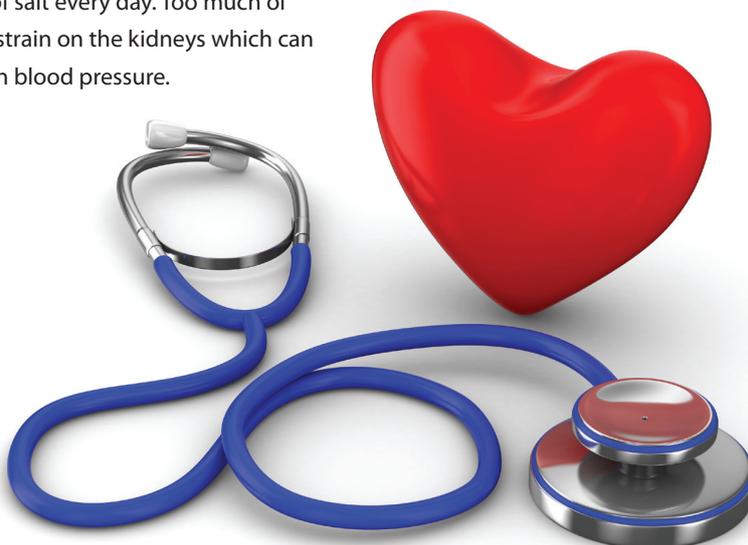
High blood pressure in pregnant women can be dangerous for both mother and her unborn child. Many babies often die as a result. If you know you're hypertensive, your blood pressure must be controlled before conceiving, and closely monitored throughout pregnancy, so keep to the check-ups.

## **Have Your Pressure Checked!**

This is especially important if you already have high blood pressure.



**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT  
KZN HEALTH ON 0800 00 51 33.**



Through the keyhole:

# ZANELE MNCWABE

## From Car Guard to ARV Support Officer:

A Story of Hope

**“To be an achiever in life you must love education and challenges.”**



Those are the inspiring words of 28 year old mother of two, Zanele Mncwabe, who works as an anti-retroviral support officer at Boom Street Clinic in Pietermaritzburg. Hers is a classic South African story of hope, determination and a passion to make a difference in society.

### Failing Matric Is Not The End

Zanele failed her matric examination in 2002. While of us in a similar situation may simply give up, she refused to give in. When she failed her exams again, she started working as a car guard, a position usually associated with males. “This really was my first job and I took it because I could not get anything else and I needed to support my family. The twelve-hour shifts were straining and long for me because I had a family to take care of. Even when the income was low I just needed an improvement in my life,” she says matter of factly.

### Moving Forward

After working as a car guard for many months, Zanele decided to become a

general cleaner following a Department of Health advert. For the next three years she worked hard at this. “I worked in the maternity ward collecting laundry, cleaning floors and moving new mothers after labour. I really enjoyed the challenge because it was different and I was respected unlike before. I also earned a decent salary,” she said gladly.

Zanele then went on to successfully pass her matric in 2004 – which marked a turning point in her life. “In 2010, another post was published, this time for ARV Support Officers. I applied and was accepted, which made me so excited because I felt that I had come a long way from where I started, due to my determination,” she says, adding that she is currently studying for a diploma in safety management.

**“People, including the young must not be afraid of challenges in their lives. When we get opportunities we must not relax but must work harder and improve ourselves to be on a higher level,” she says enthusiastically.**

A heart-warming story of hope against all odds, proving that all it takes is determination and hard work!

# WINTER IS HERE BEWARE OF FIRE!



DUDUZILE AND JABU'S HOUSE HAS JUST BURNED DOWN.



THEIR 3-YEAR OLD DAUGHTER, MBALI, WAS SERIOUSLY BURNT AND IS TAKEN AWAY IN AN AMBULANCE. THE QUESTION IS, HOW DID THE FIRE START?

EARLIER THAT NIGHT...



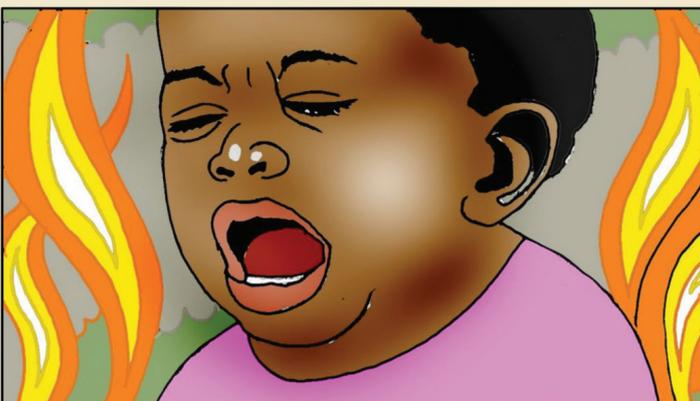
Dinner was almost ready. Duduzile stepped out of the house to call Jabu who was drinking beer with their neighbour.



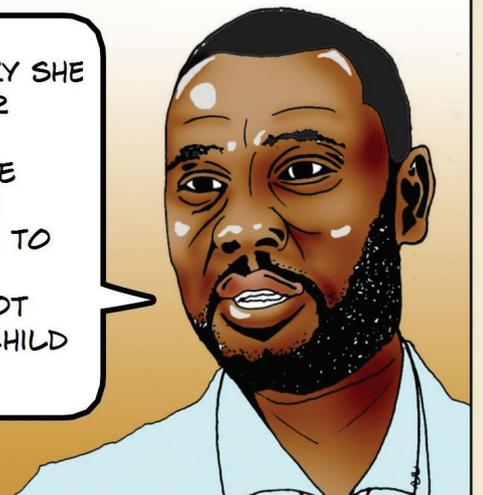
SHE LEFT HER DAUGHTER, MBALI SITTING AT THE TABLE. SHE WAS WAVING HER SPOON AROUND AND HIT THE PARAFFIN LAMP BY MISTAKE.



Soon the table was burning. Mbali screamed and didn't know what to.

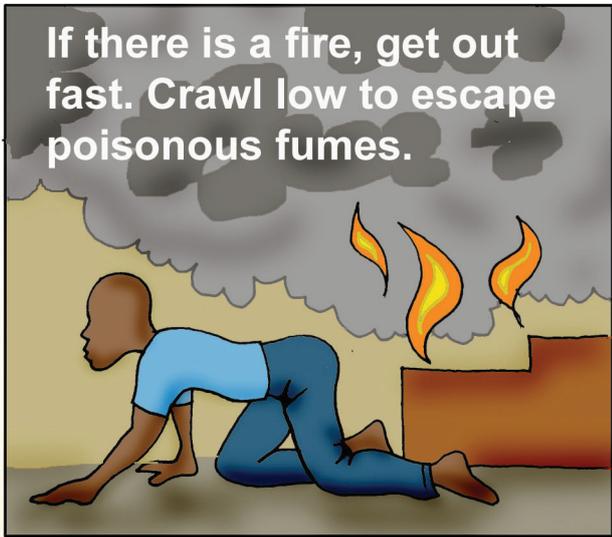


MBALI WAS LUCKY SHE DIDN'T LOSE HER LIFE. DUDUZILE SHOULD NOT HAVE LEFT A PARAFFIN LAMP SO CLOSE TO HER CHILD. SHE SHOULD ALSO NOT HAVE LEFT HER CHILD ALONE.





All homes are at risk of fire. A naked flame or illegal paraffin stove can easily start fires. Make sure you have a home safety plan. Whenever you leave your home or go to bed, make sure all candles are extinguished.



If there is a fire, get out fast. Crawl low to escape poisonous fumes.

If someone is on fire, get them to STOP, DROP to the ground and ROLL around to kill the flames.

**STOP,  
DROP  
TO THE GROUND,  
ROLL  
AROUND**



Only buy approved appliances. Make sure they are properly maintained, and make sure you do not place candles too close to your appliances. At least one and a half metres.



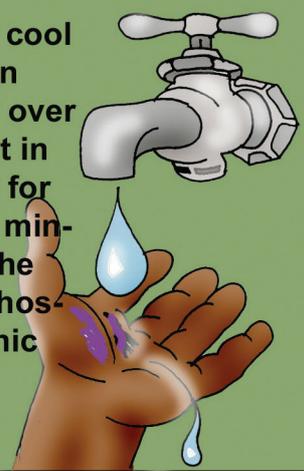
Paraffin appliances must be switched off and left to cool for at least 15 mins. Before refuelling or moving them.



If you have children, store paraffin safely away from them. Make sure the containers have a safety cap. If a child swallows paraffin, do not try to make them vomit or give them anything to eat or drink. Rush the child to hospital or a clinic.



Act fast to cool a burn. Run cool water over it or soak it in cool water for at least 20 minutes. Get the person to hospital or clinic urgently.



Teach children not to play with matches, lighters or near a fire. Always keep these locked away from them.



If a stove or pot catches fire, smother it with dry sand or a wet blanket.



If you are using flame stoves or heaters, you must have ventilation or fresh air coming into your home. It is a matter of life or death.



# APRIL

# AWARENESS DAYS

7

## World Health Day

Every one of us is responsible for our own health. While hospitals, clinics, doctors, and nurses are there for treatment and advice, it is ultimately us as single individuals to take control of our bodies. If we don't take our pills and medication correctly, and don't care much about what we eat, our body will not want to take care of us. Many medications are also becoming less effective as our immune system becomes weaker, which is why it is important to eat correctly and stick to treatments when fighting off diseases.

17

## World Haemophilia Day

Haemophilia is a lifelong bleeding disorder affecting men. It causes dangerous bleeding inside the body, the joints and the muscles. The condition needs costly medical and social attention and is not curable. The good news is that effective treatment is available due to scientists finding out more. South Africa has made haemophilia an awareness priority and the health department encourages blood donation to help deal with the shortage of blood.

23-29

## African Vaccination Week

African countries have, for the first time, come together for a joint launch of this year's African Vaccination Week under the theme "An unimmunized child is one too many. Give polio the final push."

From Algeria in North Africa to the Cape on the Southern tip of the continent, hundreds of thousands of health workers and volunteers will go out across the continent on foot, bicycles, carts and horseback; in cars, and by river and air to administer life-saving vaccines to millions of African children, women and men. The idea is to reduce the spread of the polio virus, expand the use of existing vaccines and scale-up the introduction of new ones, in order to meet the Millennium Development Goal of reducing by two-thirds the death of children under five by 2015.

APRIL 25

# WORLD MALARIA DAY

25

## Africa Malaria Day

It's difficult to believe that a small insect like a mosquito can cause such a huge amount of disease. But thanks to efforts in South Africa, the Department of Health in all provinces has managed to bring it dramatically under control. But that doesn't mean that vigilance must stop. In fact it must be stepped up to make sure the mosquito does not cause havoc again. 25 April is a day to commemorate global efforts to control malaria. The aim is to work towards zero malaria deaths by 2015.

World Malaria Day is a chance for all of us to make a difference. Help mark this year by highlighting your progress and count the strides we collectively make towards eventually eliminating malaria. Make the lives of every man, woman and child count.



## health

Department:  
Health  
**PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL**

*Fighting Disease, Fighting Poverty, Giving Hope*

# KZN HEALTH



health

Department:  
Health  
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

# NEWS

*Fighting Disease, Fighting Poverty, Giving Hope*

## GREAT CUSTOMER SERVICE STARTS WITH RESPECT' – MEC DHLOMO

*This was a clear message from the MEC for health in KwaZulu-Natal Dr SM Dhlomo during the Public Relations Officers Workshop held at the Durban's Addington Hospital recently.*

"The services surrounding the delivery of healthcare are of critical importance to our patients. It is how they judge the large part of quality of care received," MEC Dhlomo told nearly 100 Public Relations Officers (PROs), from all public health hospitals and Community Healthcare Centres. They met to build capacity to ensure that they are able to discharge their responsibilities better and ensure the delivery of quality healthcare.

"Patient-oriented healthcare service is everyone's responsibility. Patients are customers and customers are a key to the success of the department in delivering quality healthcare to all citizens," added MEC Dhlomo when he addressed the PROs during the Metropolitan Life Insurance sponsored Networking dinner. He said improving the experience of citizens at public health facilities is the responsibility of PROs.

The MEC outlined some of the key elements of better customer care. "Being at the ready," MEC Dhlomo outlined. "We expect you to be always observant and attentive and looking for the next person to walk through the door. Most of your time must be spent on the floor and you must know when a person has been waiting for too long."

The MEC added that PROs must assume the responsibility for getting to customers as quickly as possible. This means, he continued, making sure citizens come first. A PRO must stop whatever they are doing and take care of the citizens.

The second task for PROs is educating citizens. This means empowering citizens with information to better utilize the healthcare services available. It also means informing citizens of next steps, helping them think ahead to expedite processes and avoid problems. And asking them if they have questions.

MEC Dhlomo emphasised; "People are looking for solutions – NOT excuses!" He said it is not proper to pass the buck and placing the blame on others. "Even if a customer's problem is not your fault, reconciling the problem is your responsibility because you represent the Department. Avoid language that blames the healthcare user."



From the desk of Deputy Manager, Media Liaison, Chris Maxon

PROs were urged to treat each customer with integrity, dignity, respect and professionalism. Amongst the things that the MEC advised on were using the citizen's name in conversation, dressing appropriately for your position, speaking in full sentences using appropriate grammar and not chewing gum.

### The other issues that the MEC spoke on were being:

**Empathetic:** i.e., put oneself in their shoes. The citizen must feel understood;  
**Courteous:** customers and co-workers with patience, politeness, kindness, sincerity and consideration; and

**Teamwork:** collaborating with co-workers to provide the best possible service.

The MEC concluded by urging the PROs to treat public health users as their guests. "RESPECT your public health users as you would want your friends and family respected! Each encounter with a patient represents a 'trust point' in which you either build the citizen's trust on the public health system or lose their trust. Good communication – active listening and responding – is a critical part of delivering quality healthcare."



KZN Department of Health Head, Dr Sibongile Zungu with the Facilities Improvement Team from the National Health Ministry. The team will focus on improving standards of care and the turnaround of health facilities in Pongola. These include human resources, staff and community attitudes, clinical care, operational and logistical efficiency, financial management, health systems strengthening, quality, infrastructure, monitoring and evaluation and information management.

# WATCH THE PARAFFIN,

# PREVENT FIRES!

It's the time of the year when the risk of fire to our homes is high. Often we take the use of paraffin for granted, and forget that it takes only a second for it to blow up our homes, taking lives and destroying everything we have. Try to educate everyone in your family and community on the dangers of paraffin fires, using the following as your guide:

## How to prevent paraffin accidents

Never leave paraffin stove alone.

Always have a bucket of sand nearby. **Water will not put out a paraffin fire** – it will only make it worse by spreading the flames.

## Treatment for paraffin burns:

A person on fire should drop and roll on the ground to put out the flames. Running around will only make it worse. Get to a doctor, clinic or hospital immediately.

## Poisoning - prevention

Do not leave children alone and make sure they understand that paraffin is dangerous

Never store paraffin in a used milk or cool drink bottle as a child could mistakenly drink it.

Make sure that there's enough fresh air to prevent children breathing in dangerous fumes.





## Your Consumer Rights Regarding Paraffin and Other Household Goods

- Right to safe, good quality goods
- Right to warranty of quality – but this does not apply if consumers are found to be misusing or abusing goods.
- Right to receive warnings on the fact and nature of risks.
- Right to have products monitored for safety and/or recalled.
- Right to claim damages for injuries caused by unsafe/defective goods.
- Paraffin should be sold in suitable packaging with a safety warning label and a child resistant cap.
- Paraffin appliances should be of a good quality, free of defects and comply with national standards.
- Appliances must have suitable safety warnings and operating instructions.

**ALWAYS USE PARAFFIN RESPONSIBLY!**

If a child accidentally swallows paraffin, do not give them anything to eat or drink. Get them to a clinic or hospital immediately.

Never try to make someone who has drunk paraffin vomit. This could force the paraffin into the lungs and cause serious damage

### Appliances

Only buy paraffin appliances that have passed the tests making them safe. Illegal, unsafe appliances can harm and kill you.”

Keep flammable objects safely away from appliances that are turned on - at least one and a half metres.

Paraffin Appliances must be switched off and left to cool for at least 15 minutes before refuelling or moving them.

### Children

Many children suffer burn injuries at home. Always supervise children, especially toddlers and Babies – it’s the first step of a home safety plan.

Store paraffin safely up and away from children in clearly labelled containers with safety caps.

Teach children not to play with matches, lighters or near a fire. Always keep these locked away from them.

### GENERAL HOUSEHOLD ENERGY SAFETY

• Do not drink alcohol and cook. It will place you and your family at risk of serious injuries.

- Make sure everyone in your household knows the emergency numbers for the fire and ambulance services.
- If a stove or pot catches fire, smother it with dry sand or a wet blanket.”
- If you are using flame stoves or heaters, you must have ventilation or fresh air coming into your home. It is a matter of life or death.
- Paraffin is poisonous and can cause serious illness, even death if swallowed.
- It can burn the skin even when it’s not lit
- If mixed with other things like petrol, even a small amount, can cause it to explode -
- **NEVER SMOKE NEAR PARAFFIN!**

Need a good night's sleep?



Try Huggies® Lockdry™  
system tonight!

Huggies® Lockdry™ system locks away  
wetness to keep baby drier for longer



**HUGGIES**  
Disposable Nappies  
Dry Comfort®



## Tula Tula Mama...

Trying to stay awake during the day when all you want to do is sleep? Waking through the night to feed, change, and burp baby at least three times each night? Feeling tired all day because you didn't get enough sleep and don't have the energy for your baby during the day as a result?

**Does this sound like you?! Don't worry, Huggies® help has arrived!**

Huggies® Dry Comfort® nappies with their Lock Dry® System will keep baby comfortable and sleeping through the night – that means YOU get a good night's rest too, saving your energy for the day! But, also remember the following two tips to help with settling baby for the night:

### 1. ROUTINE

Most babies respond well to routine, and it calms them down. A typical routine would be to give baby a warm bath or wash, a feed at around 10pm (remember breast milk is best!), a short relaxing time where you sing to him/her then put baby down to sleep.

### 2. NIGHT WAKE

All babies wake during the night, but it's when they need you to help them get back to sleep that's a problem! A wet nappy or hunger are the two main reasons baby will cry. Huggies® Dry Lock® System will take care of the wet nappy, and feeding baby before putting them down to sleep should allow them to sleep longer. If they wake, feed them at least once, making sure that your breast is producing enough milk for baby to satisfy their hunger.

Focus on:



**EARLY  
WARNING  
SIGNS!**

# CHILDHOOD CANCER

*Around 800 children are diagnosed with cancer in South Africa each year and a further 500 die of childhood cancer before it is even diagnosed or treated. Yet, cancer is more often associated with adults, which is why it comes as quite a shock to us when we learn of a child being diagnosed.*

For this reason, the Childhood Cancer Foundation South Africa (CHOC) is working hard to raise awareness of the disease which continues to claim lives and destroy families each year. The message is real and should be taken seriously: Early detection of cancer can save the lives of our children. With this in mind, The South African Childhood Cancer Study Group (SACCSG) has drawn up a list of EARLY WARNING SIGNS to watch out for in children which is being used by medical practitioners and traditional healers so that they too can refer children for further medical intervention.

**Get Medical Help if your child continues to have any of the following:**

- White spot in the eye, new squint, sudden or gradual blindness, bulging eyeball.
- A lump in any of the following places: stomach, pelvis, head and

neck, limbs, testes and glands.

- A fever lasting more than 2 weeks with loss of weight, pallor, tiredness, easy bruising or bleeding.
- Aching of bones, joints, back, and easy fractures.
- Change or deterioration in their walk, balance, or speech, regression of milestones, headache for more than two weeks with or without vomiting, enlarging head.

**For more information about childhood cancer, contact CHOC on 0861112072 or 086 111 2182.**

