

HEALTH MATTERS **FREE** Ezempilo

EDUCATE || INFORM || EMPOWER EDITION 2 • 2012

**Your child's health
is your responsibility**

PREGNANCY:
*Why your clinic visit
is important*



health

Department:
Health
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

A SPECIAL IMMUNISATION DRIVE AGAINST PNEUMOCOCCAL DISEASE!

IT IS ESTIMATED THAT UP TO 1 MILLION CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF FIVE DIE FROM PNEUMOCOCCAL DISEASE - WHICH INCLUDES PNEUMOCOCCAL MENINGITIS, PNEUMONIA AND BLOOD INFECTION - EVERY YEAR.¹

When: 1st February to 31 May 2012.

Where: At your Local Clinic.

Who: Children 18 months to below 3 years and High Risk Children up to 6 years.



Prevent 13
pneumococcal disease

From February to May 2012, all children aged 18 months to 35 months (under 3 years), will receive an extra dose of the pneumococcal conjugate vaccine at their local clinic free of charge. All high-risk children that are younger than 6 years of age, including children living with HIV, diabetes, heart disease, kidney failure and other conditions will be given 2 pneumococcal conjugate vaccines, 8 weeks apart.

So bring your child and their Road to Health card / Booklet to your local clinic and join the Department of Health and Pfizer in the fight against pneumococcal disease.

For more information on pneumococcal disease call 0861 773 8368 or go to www.prevent.co.za

You can make a difference!



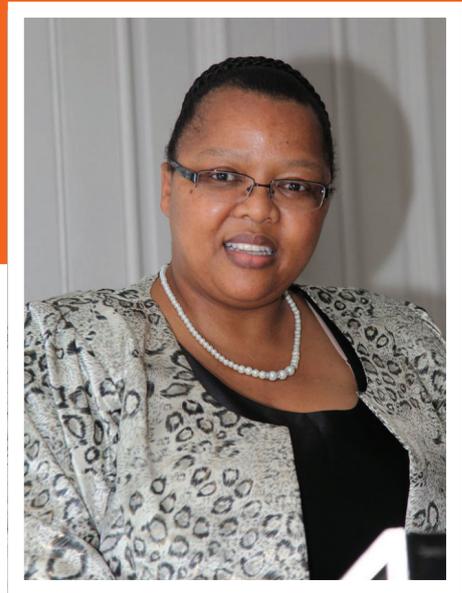
Working together for a healthier world™

Pfizer Call Centre: 0860 Pfizer (734 937)
Website: www.Pfizer.co.za

Pfizer Laboratories (Pty) Ltd, 85 Bute Lane, Sandton, 2196, P O Box 783720, Sandton, 2146, Pfizer Call Centre: 0860 Pfizer (734 937).
www.Pfizer.co.za. Further information is available on request from Pfizer Laboratories (Pty) Ltd.

Ref 1. O'Brien KL, Wolfson LJ, Watt JP, Henkle E, Deloria-Knoll M, McCall N, et al. Burden of disease caused by *Streptococcus pneumoniae* in children younger than 5 years: global estimates. *Lancet*. 2009;374:893-902.
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Message From...



KZN Health HoD, Dr Sibongile Zungu

We have the most beautiful province in the country, rich in land and fertile soil, yet the reality is that our children continue to die – through malnutrition, HIV, lack of immunisation and 35% because they were not breast fed, or inadequately breastfed. For every 1000 babies born, 60 die before they turn 5, the majority in their first year.

We should be very concerned, especially because these tragedies can be avoided. As mothers, parents, community workers, and elders, it is our responsibility and the right of children to ensure that they are being taken care of. This doesn't mean providing for things that are beyond our means. It means making sure that our children receive the proper immunisations on time, which are free at all government health facilities and provides the best protection against childhood diseases. It also means encouraging our communities to start vegetable gardens to support those living in poverty. These are simple things that we can do to make a difference.

As February also marks Sexual and Reproductive Health month, we need to recognize that sexual health is about taking responsibility for one's own sexual behavior. Sexually transmitted infections (STIs), especially HIV, in the Province have increased in the younger age group, despite government efforts to curb the spread. As a province with the highest rates of diseases, it's time to ask ourselves, what am I doing to make a difference to the overall health of myself and those around me? As a collective, we all can do so much more, and I would like to encourage everyone to go out and make that difference. Whether it is in your school, community, church, clinic or at home. Talk about what it means to take responsibility for your health, it begins with you. Visit your clinic, go for regular checkups, encourage those close to you to do the same. It's time to stop being ashamed about acting responsibly for your sexual health. Not wearing a condom when you endanger the lives of multiple partners is not being a man, it's cowardly. Not visiting your clinic for ante natal care when pregnant is denying your baby the right to important health care.

It's time to be proactive instead of reactive. Only then can we turn the tide and see a KwaZulu Natal that we can truly call a healthy province.

Let's make the difference, it begins with you!



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Fighting Disease, Fighting Poverty, Giving Hope

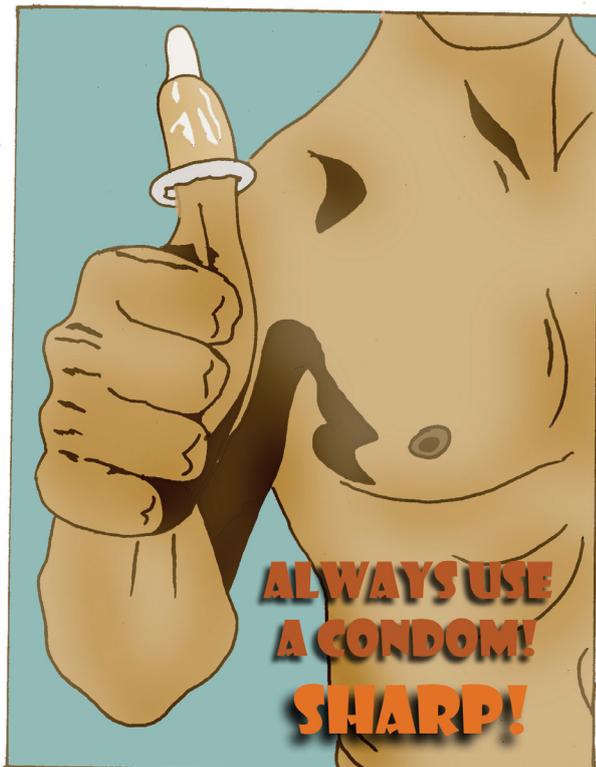
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Your suggestions and comments are welcome, and if you have been impressed by a health worker who provided an outstanding service, let us know and we will feature them! Contact us on 031 562 9803, editor@ezempilohealthmatters.co.za or write to us on PO Box 25439, Gateway 4321.

IMMUNISATION SAVES LIVES...

DON'T DELAY, IMMUNISE YOUR CHILD TODAY.

Many children die before they turn five, mainly because they did not receive the proper protection against childhood diseases. For this reason, the Department of Health has started a drive to make sure that all children are immunized on a regular basis. It strengthens your child's immune system to help fight off germs that may cause diseases like polio, measles, hepatitis B, diphtheria, tuberculosis (TB) and meningitis.

**IT'S FREE
AND SAFE!**

Who needs to be immunised?

Newborn babies and children up to the age of 5 years. As a parent it is your responsibility to make sure that you take your child to your local clinic to receive their immunisation at the right time. A detailed record of this is requested when applying for school registration or social grants, and your health worker will issue you with a card soon after you give birth when you are discharged. ***The card has a "Road to Health Chart" that will tell you when your child must have the next immunization, so it's important to keep this card safe as health workers will need this information when you take your child for their next visit.***

Steps to follow

- Visit your local clinic.
- Fill in a form/card on if you are a first time visitor. If it's not your first time, make sure you take your health card with you.
- Let the nursing sister know your child's age and history of immunisations.
- The nursing sister will take your child's weight, length and the head size to check if your child is growing at the expected rate.
- The child will be immunised according to their age.
- You will be advised on how to handle the child's reaction to the vaccine (they sometimes develop a fever from the vaccine and it is advisable to inform the nursing sister if your child is allergic to eggs).
- You will then be given the date for the next immunisation.

REMEMBER IT'S FREE AT ALL STATE HEALTH FACILITIES, SO GIVE YOUR CHILD THE BEST PROTECTION AGAINST CHILDHOOD DISEASES. THEIR HEALTH DEPENDS ON YOU, BE SURE THEY GET THE COMPLETE SERIES OF VACCINES



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Pregnancy Week February 12-18

All you need to know!

You're pregnant. Whether it was planned or not, it's about taking responsibility for you and your baby's health. So make sure you know exactly what you need to do.

Here's some help to get you started:

When to start Ante natal clinic?

- Miss two menstrual periods and then report to the clinic.
- They should confirm if you really are pregnant, and if you are, they will book you right away.
- Safe to start early before you are 3 months pregnant.

Why should you visit the clinic?

- To make sure that you and your baby are healthy and safe, by checking your health history.
- If there are any medical or even previous pregnancy problems – interventions are done straight away, so that by the time you deliver, you and your baby are safe.
- If you are HIV positive, there is still hope that you can deliver an HIV free baby, which is why it's important to report as early as possible to your clinic.

What can you expect from the clinic?

- They will check your blood Pressure; urine, weight, - all done to check if there are no unknown diseases that could affect you or your baby.
- Blood tests are also done for infections like syphilis or HIV.

Health eating for you and baby:

- Whatever you eat affects baby too, so it's especially important to eat the right foods for a healthy baby.
- Veggies and fruits are important to build up your protection from diseases/infections.
- Meat/beans/fish etc. are important to build up muscles and the baby is dependent on you to get these.
- Drinking lots of water.
- There is no eating for two, just eat your share and the baby will benefit from that, as long as it's healthy.

Medications during pregnancy:

Be careful about using unprescribed medications which might endanger your baby, including “izihlambezo”.

Healthy pregnancy:

- Your baby should start kicking at about 5 months, several times a day. Try to understand their kicks so that you will be able to notice any change.
- As the baby grows bigger, and the baby goes down a little bit, the baby’s head pushes on the bones and you might feel uncomfortable, this is normal.

Signs of labour:

at the end of pregnancy, usually 9 months, you will go into labour – that means the baby is coming. Signs to watch for include:

- Dull backache that comes and goes
- Period like pain.
- Feeling pressure as your baby’s head presses against your pelvis.
- Water may break – that means baby is getting ready to come out.
- A show (small whitish liquid from the vagina may be seen, sometimes with some blood).
- If you are in true labour, pains will get stronger closer.

IMPORTANT

Go to your nearest clinic or hospital at that stage, so that they can confirm whether you are in true labour or not.

Unhealthy habits:

these can harm your unborn baby, so try to give them up:

- Smoking: if you smoke your baby smoke too, and this can affect your baby’s development, leaving your baby born with serious diseases that cannot be corrected. Your baby can even die in the womb.
- Alcohol: this also goes straight to the baby. Your baby could also have problems developing in the womb. She/he may grow very slow, do badly at school or even have mental retardation.

FOR YOUR SAKE AND YOUR BABY’S GIVE UP THESE HABITS BEFORE IT’S TOO LATE!

Dangers in pregnancy:

these shouldn’t happen when you are pregnant, and should they happen, you must report immediately to the nearest clinic or hospital:

- Bleeding while pregnant.
- Your baby shouldn’t stop kicking.
- Water breaking before you are 9 months pregnant.
- Persistent headache that is accompanied by blurred vision.
- Dizziness

IMPORTANT

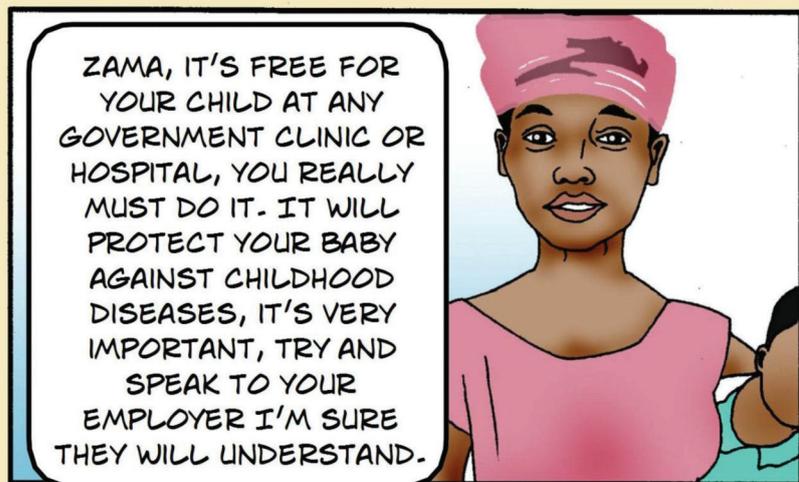
Visit the clinic regularly as advised for frequent check ups. It is important to stick to those visits; so that they can identify and treat any problems early on.

PVC 13 CATCH UP DRIVE



ZAMA- HAVE YOU TAKEN ANDILE FOR HIS INJECTION YET?

HAIBO, SINDISIWE! WHEN AM I GOING TO FIND THE TIME? I WORK ALL WEEK, AND BESIDES I CAN'T AFFORD IT.



ZAMA, IT'S FREE FOR YOUR CHILD AT ANY GOVERNMENT CLINIC OR HOSPITAL, YOU REALLY MUST DO IT. IT WILL PROTECT YOUR BABY AGAINST CHILDHOOD DISEASES, IT'S VERY IMPORTANT, TRY AND SPEAK TO YOUR EMPLOYER I'M SURE THEY WILL UNDERSTAND.



EH?



DID YOU KNOW THAT MANY CHILDREN DIE BEFORE THEY TURN FIVE? THAT'S BECAUSE THEY WERE NOT IMMUNISED.



EISH, REALLY? I DIDN'T KNOW IT WAS THAT IMPORTANT..



WELL, THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH HAS STARTED THIS CAMPAIGN CALLED, "PVC 13 CATCH UP DRIVE."



THAT SOUNDS LIKE AN EVENT FOR SLOW DRIVERS!



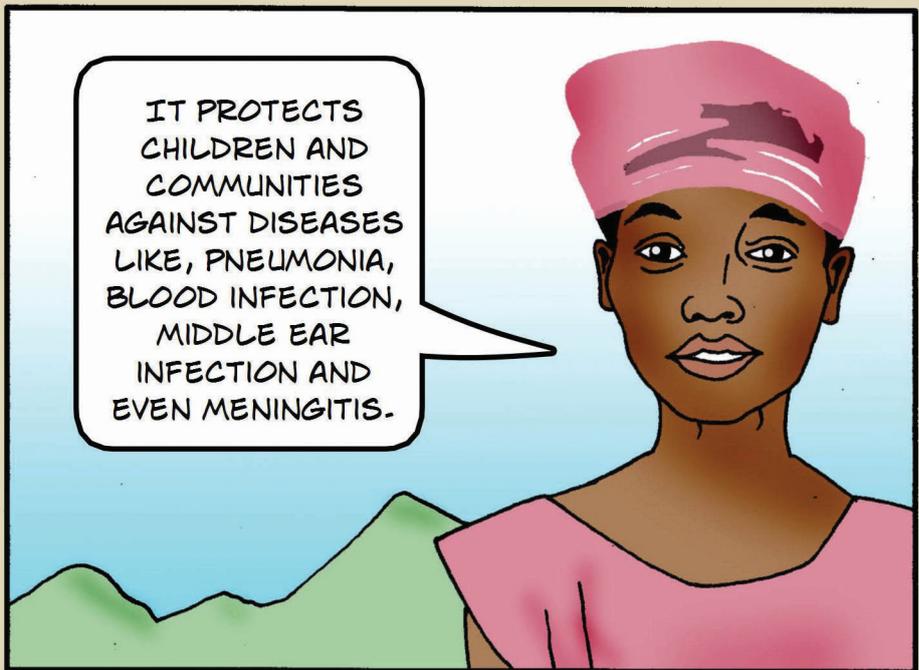
HA HA HA!



AY WENA, NO, IT'S A FREE ADD-ON IMMUNISATION CALLED PCV13 FOR YOUR CHILD, BUT ALL CHILDREN BETWEEN 18-36 MONTHS MUST BE TAKEN TO CLINICS TO BE IMMUNISED ON TIME. IT'S YOUR RESPONSIBILITY AS A PARENT.



WHAT'S THIS PCV13?



IT PROTECTS CHILDREN AND COMMUNITIES AGAINST DISEASES LIKE, PNEUMONIA, BLOOD INFECTION, MIDDLE EAR INFECTION AND EVEN MENINGITIS.



I'M SO PLEASED WE SPOKE SINDISIWE. I WILL TAKE ANDILE TOMORROW TO THE CLINIC AND EXPLAIN TO MY EMPLOYER ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE!

**DON'T DELAY,
VACCINATE
TODAY AND
PROTECT YOUR
CHILD!**

FOCUS ON

PHOLELA COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE

Role model in primary health care!



We often hear people complain about rural health in our country. Too few doctors, not enough staff, not enough resources, the list goes on. But, despite all this, there are those clinics that despite the challenges rise above the obstacles and strive to beat the odds. Pholela Community Health Centre Ingwe (KwaHlanganani) is one of them. More importantly, it's also where primary health care started – now the main focus of the new National Health Insurance which will change our health service, from focussing only on curing, to prevention of diseases.

MEC Dhlomo celebrates with staff at Pholela CHC.

WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT PHOLELA CHC?

It all began in 1940, when it became the first ever Health Centre to be established by the then Union Health Department. Following its success as a community health facility, the government decided to establish Health Centres around the country. All health professionals were first sent to Pholela CHC to gain experience before being sent to other health centres around the country, making it an important facility to practise primary health care, serving the needs of the local community.

Recognition

Pholela CHC is known all over the world as the site where the Community Oriented Primary Health Care concept successfully started. A professor, who has since passed on, Sydney Kark is credited with introducing the primary health care approach, where the community's health needs become known to the health care workers through interaction with the community where health workers conducted home visits and gave health education to families, while mapping areas, understanding the culture and beliefs of the community, socio-economic status as well as prevalent conditions – all complimenting the Operation Sukuma Sakhe strategy of KZN. As a result, the local community started getting involved, taking responsibility for their own health, becoming more proactive.

Revival

Realising the role that community health played in South Africa, the new Pholela CHC was built with help from donors brought in by the then Minister for Health Dr Nkosazana Zuma who also grew up depending on Pholela Health Centre for her Health needs as a member of Bulwer Community.

Pholela CHC Today

Pholela CHC, despite the challenges it faces as a rural facility, continues to strive to deliver health care as best as it can, with quality results that are to be admired. There are currently 7 Clinics that are satellite to Pholela CHC and many outreach community programmes.

SERVICES ON OFFER AT PHOLELA CHC, PLUS GOING THE EXTRA MILE!

- *General medical & surgical services*
- *Mobile clinic*
- *Home visits & health education – on horseback*
- *Community garden – for malnourished & pregnant clients*
- *X-Ray*
- *Dental clinic*

WHAT HAVE THEY ACHIEVED?

- *Close interaction with Traditional Health Practitioners (20 trained on TB Management)*
- *TB door-to-door visits (quarterly)*
- *Oral Health outreach*
- *Mother-to-mother-to-be Programme (M2M2B)*
- *All satellite clinics are down-referral sites for ARV treatment*
- *Visiting needy families and providing assistance where possible with hampers and referrals.*
- *Conducted HIV Survey on staff*
- *Izandla Eziphephile award on 26 November 2010*

NEW INITIATIVES

Trace teams, plus 2 vehicles for tracing of treatment defaulters for chronic diseases, TB and ARVs. The centre was among the few to receive the new Gene Expert machine from MEC DR Sibongiseni Dlomo. The machine is a major development in TB treatment because it can diagnose TB within 24 hours.

RESULTS

The community work of Pholela CHC has resulted in a decrease defaulter rate to 0, an increasing cure rate from 57 to 64, an increased smear conversion rate from 42% to 53% and prevention of MDR & XDR TB.

COMMUNITY VISITS

Pholela CHC workers do not sit back; they are actively involved in the community, making regular door to door visits, with the following aims:

- *Health education on how to prevent diseases*
- *Advice on garden, hygiene, sanitation, water and address problems regarding sanitation and water with municipality*
- *Assist those who cannot visit the clinic for early detection of TB to prevent the spread of TB*
- *Encouraging poultry farming and gardening to address poverty*

CHALLENGES

Like all rural health facilities in our country, Pholela CHC also suffers the same challenges due to budget constraints. However, they refuse to allow these restrictions to get in the way of being proactive and making the best of what they have, and the results clearly show that they are leading the way in primary health care, with KZN Health HOD Dr Sibongile Zungu also visiting the centre recently to understand how they manage to achieve positive results despite all the challenges.

Halala Pholela CHC for leading the way!

KZN HEALTH



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NEWS

“Save your child, immunise against childhood diseases”

– KZN Health MEC, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo



From the desk of...
Spokesperson Chris Maxon

Since his appointment, KZN Health MEC Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo has been driving forward the message that the health of mother and child is his top priority. “Too many mothers and babies are dying un-necessarily,” he says. Even more worrying, says the MEC, is the fact there is a high number of child deaths even before they reach the age of five.

One of the main reasons is because these children have not been vaccinated against

childhood diseases on time. Now, thanks to a partnership between the Department of Health and the private sector, a campaign has started, called ‘Catch-Up Immunisation.’

The idea of this important campaign is to try and make sure that that we are getting more children to catch up with the necessary immunisations that they need by providing those under five with an extra dose of PCV13. This is a vaccine which protects them against pneumococcal diseases.

Since his appointment as national health minister, Aaron Motsoaledi as well as KZN MEC Dr Dhlomo have expressed concern at the unacceptable under 5 mortality rate, which they largely attribute to poor primary healthcare interventions such as immunisation. “In fact, I am worried that given our performance in this area (infant and child mortality) we may not be able to realise our MDG commitments especially the one about reducing child mortality”, says Motsoaledi. As a result, the

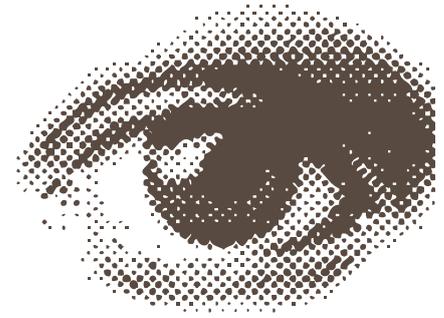
campaign over the next two months will hope to save more children from un-necessary death due to the lack of vaccination.

TARGETED GROUPS for the CATCH-UP IMMUNISATION CAMPAIGN are:

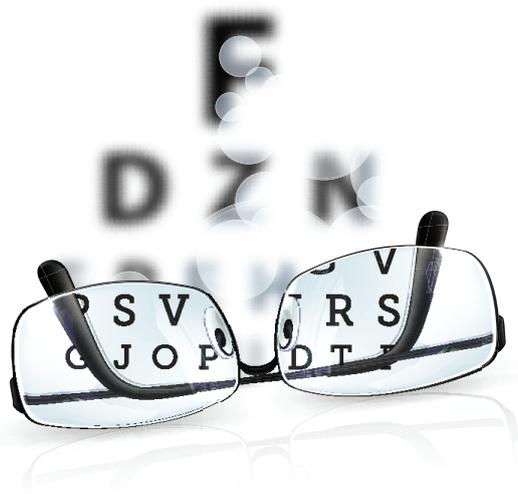
- All children between 18-36 months
- Children with underlying medical conditions, e.g. HIV infection, cardiac conditions and those who are on cytotoxics.

The department calls upon all parents and care-givers to take advantage of this opportunity and take their children to clinics to receive their immunization – don’t delay!

EYE CARE



Is more important than you think



It may surprise you to learn that you could be saved from serious illness by having your eyes tested more often. Regular examination of your eyes can tell you what illnesses you are likely to get even before there are any physical signs! During an examination an optician can check for conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure, hypertension and excess cholesterol – just by examining your eyes!

Mobile eye clinics are the best way to make sure you find out about what health conditions you could be at risk of, so make the effort to go out and have your eyes checked! **To help you, use the information below so that you can get the best out of the eye test:**

DIABETES

Can any eye examination look for diabetes?

Yes. Certain changes around and inside the eye can cause an optician to suspect diabetes and send the patient for immediate tests. The blood vessels in the eye are very delicate and are often the first to be affected by diabetes.

What vision problems are a sign of diabetes?

Fluctuating vision (good one day and poor the next) is a common sign. Generally, diabetes may cause poorer distance vision, but improve close reading vision.

What special eye care must be taken by diabetics? Good control over the blood sugar levels is important. An eye examination at least once a year is important to check any changes in the eye.

CATARACTS

The word 'cataract' refers to the total or partly cloudiness of the lens inside your eye. Cataracts can be very small, or large, causing loss of eye sight.

They are most common in people over 55 years of age, but can sometimes affect younger people and even babies.

What causes a cataract?

Although no direct link has been found for sure, experts suspect age, heredity (when it is passed on in the family), disease or damage to the eye as main reasons. Both eyes are usually affected, but not at the same rate.

What are the symptoms of cataract development?

Since no pain or redness is normally experienced, you should watch out for hazy/blurred vision or a 'film over the eyes', spots in front of the eyes or even a growing sensitivity to glare, particularly at night.

Treatment for cataracts?

Although changes in spectacle lenses can help vision for a time, if the cataract worsens to a stage where it affects normal life, then it needs to be removed through an operation. This is uncomplicated and straight forward, and is 95% effective.

**04
FEB**

World Cancer Day

IT'S NOT A DEATH SENTENCE

It's called the silent killer, and kills more people than HIV/Aids, malaria and TB combined. More people die of cancer than any other disease in the world. But, there is hope, treatment and a cure if detected early. It's NOT a death sentence!



WHAT IS CANCER?

It's a general name for a group of more than 100 diseases where cells in a certain part of the body begin to grow out of control. Smoking is the biggest cause of cancer in the world.

MEN

Every man should check his testicles at least once a month. Look out for any unusual swellings, lumps, pain or heaviness. If you notice any of these signs, visit your doctor.

WOMEN

Cancer can be cured if caught early, so it is important to go for regular check-ups. Ask your local health worker to teach you to examine your breasts often, as breast cancer is the most common cancer in women. Cervical cancer affects the lower part of a woman's womb, and is the second most common cancer among women. The Department of Health offers 3 free tests (called Pap Smears) to women over 30 which checks for Cervical cancer. All women who are sexually active should go for regular Pap Smears as this can check for cancer.



EARLY WARNING SIGNS FOR CANCER IN CHILDREN

- Headaches, with vomiting, at night or early morning
- Swelling or pain in bones, back and legs
- Lump in the stomach, neck, chest, or armpits
- Excessive bruising, bleeding, or rash
- Constant infections
- A white spot in black centre of the eye
- Tiredness all the time

TREATMENT

Cancer is usually treated through chemotherapy, which involves having a drip, or radiation, which takes a few minutes. Both treatments are available at hospitals, and depend on how long you've had the cancer. People are different, and like all medicines, respond differently to treatment.

EARLY DETECTION AND TREATMENT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO FIGHT CANCER. THIS IS BECAUSE CANCER CAN SPREAD TO OTHER PARTS OF THE BODY THROUGH THE BLOOD STREAM. GO FOR REGULAR CHECK UPS!

February 12-18

STI / Condom Week

A true story...

They called him Skhokho, 'a cool man with many girlfriends'.

Young men in his community admired his wild ways of living. He drove flashy cars; was educated; had many beautiful girlfriends and would party every weekend. His target was young school girls, desperate for a better life. They flocked to him like flies and he never turned them away.

"Young women need good food and enjoy being in a nice car," he said. He rarely used condoms, claiming to be sensitive to them. The girls knew they were falling into a trap, but were too caught up with the gifts and money to say no...until it was too late. Many fell pregnant, with a sexually transmitted infection and HIV. By then, they were dumped and Sandile moved on to his next victim, leaving them without finishing school, unemployed and with a baby to take care.



A former girlfriends of his, Zinhle Magwaza, a sixteen year old orphan explains how she felt. "I was dumped because I insisted he used condoms. He told me not worry because he was circumcised and nothing will happen to me because he was already protected. He said even if I get sick he would take care of me. When I insisted he use a condom. He was angry and he dumped me saying he can get any girl. I'm not sorry, because I know many girls who fell for his trap and I am glad I didn't. I also know that circumcision doesn't mean you can get a sexually transmitted infection," said Zinhle.

Women especially are at high risk of STI infection than men. An estimated four million people receive STI treatment each year in South African hospitals but more are embarrassed to visit clinics and as a result suffer complications or even death

- ▶ Always use protection when having sex and avoid many partners.
- ▶ Always use condoms properly to avoid bursting during sex. Heat can damage them, so keep them in a cool dry place and do not use creams or oils with them as this can cause them to break.

Sexual Health begins with You!

RUBBISH *Dumping* IS A HEALTH AND SAFETY HAZARD!

Protect our community and the health of our children...

It's something we take for granted, but more children are at risk of injuries and health dangers every day. While parents go out and work, many young children play outdoors, bare feet and often end up looking through dumps to find something to play with. Things like old needles, pill bottles, used condoms and expired medication are some of the things that are found and end up harming unsuspecting children. Dump sites that are not properly managed can create a food source for rats, flies and mosquitoes which in turn spread deadly diseases into homes. We should all be taking responsibility for our environment to make sure it becomes a safe place for our children too.

Decomposing garbage and industrial chemicals not only give off bad odours but also cause harm to the environment. Some industrial waste materials contain hazardous chemicals that cannot be visible with the eye. These chemicals sink into the soil during rain and can also contaminate our drinking water like wells and boreholes causing a health risk to communities and animals. Please do your bit and protect the environment, it's the only one we have!



PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

- Educate children to stay away and not to pick anything from dumping sites.
- Report any form of illegal dumping in your area
- Put your rubbish in designated areas every time
- Separate waste and keep things like food leftover as organic fertiliser for the garden
- All medical waste must be properly disposed
- Be a responsible citizen, say no to illegal dumping

HAZARDS FROM DUMPS

- Contact with waste without protection can result in serious skin and blood infections
- Smoke and dust can cause eye and respiratory infections
- Large populations of rodents and flies cause plagues and diseases
- Contaminated water can result in stomach infections or death
- Poisoning and chemical burns resulting from contact with hazardous chemicals

Awareness Days February



NATIONAL HEALTHY LIFESTYLE Awareness Month:

February has been declared lifestyle awareness month, which is the government's way of ensuring that all South Africans take note of their eating and lifestyle habits. Far too many South Africans are becoming obese, and this month is used to encourage everyone to take part in five key elements of the healthy lifestyle campaign which are:

PROMOTION OF GOOD NUTRITION AND EXERCISE
INTERVENTIONS AGAINST ALCOHOL & SUBSTANCE ABUSE
PROMOTION OF SAFE SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR

FEB 1 – MAY 31: IMMUNISATION CAMPAIGN

Vaccinations are the most important thing you can do for your child. It protects them from deadly childhood diseases. Up to three million children are saved every year around the world because they have been immunized, while in South Africa many die even before they turn five. The Department of Health together with a private company, is launching a campaign called Catch Up Drive – aimed at providing extra protection for children between 18 and 36 months, for free at all state health facilities. Take advantage of this and get your child vaccinated, it's your responsibility as a parent.

FEB 4: WORLD CANCER DAY

World Cancer Day is used to raise awareness of the impact of cancer and to increase our understanding of prevention, detection, treatment and care. It's a reality; cancer is a leading cause of death worldwide. The good news is that there is a lot of progress in medicine to deal with cancer, and it is no longer a death sentence, the sooner it is detected, the better your chance of beating it, so go for regular checkups!

FEB 12-18: PREGNANCY AWARENESS WEEK:

The Department of Health uses Pregnancy Awareness Week to strengthen pregnancy education and stress important issues that promote healthy pregnancy and safe motherhood, especially early booking at the clinic. Pregnant women should start attending antenatal care as soon as they suspect that they are pregnant and certainly within their first trimester. It helps protect you and your baby against complications later on.

FEB 12–18: CONDOM/STI WEEK:

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are a major cause for concern, even though most of the infections can be cured. The fear of being stigmatised is one of the many reasons why people don't visit clinics for treatment and this week is aimed not only at reducing the spread of STI but also to curb the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Through the Keyhole...

Saluting the health workers of Pholela Community Health Centre



Pholela Community Health Centre is a place of firsts. It was started by a couple from Israel with a vision of community health – a concept recognised all over the world today at Primary Health Care. With this in mind, health workers at Pholela CHC have worked hard to address their community's health needs, despite the many challenges.

Their hard work is paying off. "We've recorded a downward trend in teenage pregnancy in recent years due to the educational programmes that we do and also witnessed a successful TB patient treatment increase from 64.7% in 2010 to 83% in 2011," says Thembi Sikhakhane, Pholela CHC nursing manager.

Serving a local population of about 25 000, health workers at the Centre attend to around 200 patients every day, and Thembi is proud to be part of the success. She explains that her mission to change the institution came in 2005. "After working as a



Thembi in the Pholela CHC Garden

nurse for twenty years I decided to resign and take a break from the profession. But after six months I realised I missed my patients and returned," she says.

It's a feel good story of inspiration, especially in a profession that's often over worked. "We have no maternal deaths in our maternity ward, and received a silver award for our quality of service in 2008 and in 2010 we received an award for maternity excellence.

"It's about working as a team, together you can achieve so much more, even if you have obstacles on the way," adds Thembi. Wise words of inspiration indeed...



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