

Measles Awareness and Prevention in Ekurhuleni South District

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Eden Park in Ekurhuleni has seen several cases of measles in the past month, this was reported by primary healthcare service providers in the area. In response, ward-based outreach teams are busy doing awareness campaigns to inform the community about this outbreak, which normally affects children from six months and upwards.

The signs and symptoms of measles start with a runny nose, cough, small white spots inside the cheeks, or a white rash inside the mouth. These symptoms may last for four to seven days. Afterwards, the rash may appear usually seven days after a person was in contact with someone infected, usually in the face and upper neck to hands and feet and spreads over and lasts up to five days before it fades.

The treatment of measles includes being vaccinated for measles beforehand for the body to be immune to the virus or bacteria by the professional nurse at the clinic or the hospital. When visiting the clinic parents must always have the 'Road to health' booklet given to infants by the clinic when the child is born to record the birth history, the immunisation history, growth of the child. This will have information about whether the child is vaccinated or not.

The first measles dose is given to children at six months then the second dose from twelve months old.

In an unfortunate case where there's an outbreak of measles, everyone who is exposed to the child or adult is supposed to be vaccinated against it. If someone is affected was in contact with the virus, that person is tested before diagnosis for proof and only after will they be treated. Patients are re-acquired to isolate themselves.

It is through contact with the person who is infected with the virus that one may contract measles, especially our children at home and school because they play together. Parents should also be attentive, especially with children at crèche they normally don't take note of such signs until it's late some kids have already been infected.

This awareness campaign the team are currently doing is to make sure our communities are aware and should take note of the signs and symptoms. For vaccination at crèche and schools, the department sends out consent forms for parents to sign. The professional nurse will be on site to perform the vaccination and for community campaigns the personal consent of the mother or caregiver is needed for children who are not attending crèche or school.

What is even alarming, is that the Mpox that is currently spreading in the country and communities. We need to be aware of the virus and be able to prevent it by taking necessary measures. The Mpox, previously known as the monkeypox, is an infectious disease caused by the monkeypox virus. Anyone can get it as it spreads from being in contact with a person who is already infected. People get it through touching, kissing, sexual intercourse, pregnant women may pass the virus to their

unborn baby. Symptoms include skin rash on hands, feet, chest, near the genitals including the penis, vagina, and anus. Please visit your nearest clinic and hospital when you experience this disease. Getting an Mpox vaccine to prevent infections which is given within 4 days when you have been in contact with the person infected.

If a person is already infected, it is important to tell everyone you met recently and stay at home until all itch fall off and new layer of the skin forms, always wear a mask and avoid physical contact with anyone.

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