

16 January 2023

RE: IMASA STATEMENT 2022/2023 - MEASLES OUTBREAK

The **Islamic Medical Association of South Africa [IMASA]** heeds the clarion call of the National Institute for Communicable Diseases and urges parents to get their children vaccinated against Measles.

The World Health Organization (WHO) classifies a measles outbreak as three or more cases were reported within 30 days in a defined district. This outbreak was initially declared in Limpopo in October 2022 and since then has spread to five provinces. Provinces that have been declared “Measle Outbreak,” include Limpopo, Mpumalanga, Northwest, Gauteng and the Free State. A few cases were also reported in the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Northern Cape and in the Western Cape. However, these latter provinces do not fulfil the WHO measles outbreak criteria as yet.

According to the latest report on the NICD website (12/ 1 /23), a total of 357 cases have thus far been reported. They also state that although the number of cases in the country continue to rise, the number of specimens and of positive cases submitted in the last three weeks appear to be decreasing in comparison with the previous week. However, they caution that with schools reopening we need to continue to maintain our vigilance, both at school or crèche environments. Caregivers and parents are advised to review their childrens’ vaccination records.

Measles is a highly contagious disease caused by a virus. The most common presenting symptoms are fever and a rash (not itchy nor painful) that looks like small, flat, red spots all over the body. Other symptoms include a cough, red eyes, and a runny nose.

The virus can cause severe complications like diarrhoea, dehydration, pneumonia, infection in the brain, blindness and even death. Malnourished children and those under two years of age are most at risk.

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Prevention and control of measles outbreaks can be achieved through vaccination and we make dua that the disease be controlled very soon AAMEEN. Over the years vaccines have succeeded in preventing countless cases of infectious diseases, like measles, and their complications resulting in reduction in disabilities and the saving of millions of lives. Therefore, major vaccination campaigns by the Department of Health have commenced or are being planned countrywide.

IMASA supports these endeavours and encourages vaccination uptake.

Dr Mohammed Irshad Moosa [President of IMASA]

Dr Shakira Cassim [Vice President of IMASA]

References <https://www.nicd.ac.za/south-african-measles-outbreak-2023-12-january/>

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