

# WOMAN OF ACTION: NEW HEALTH MEC MS NOMAGUGU SIMELANE-ZULU READY FOR PROVINCE'S CHALLENGES



## Newly-appointed Health MEC Ms Nomagugu Simelane-Zulu believes she has the antidote to the province's health challenges.

Ms Simelane-Zulu, 42, originally from Dobsonville, Johannesburg, was sworn in as Health MEC two weeks ago.

Speaking from her office at Pietermaritzburg's Natalia Building, she highlighted aspects she hopes to tackle during her term.

She made an unscheduled visit to Northdale Hospital on her second day of work where she expressed her disquiet at how patient records were kept.

Ms Simelane-Zulu believed e-filing should be implemented to address inefficiency and congestion issues.

"I understand the Department tried in the past and we are going to review what happened. It cuts down on waiting, wasted

human resources and time required to search for files. Time which could have been spent where the patient had a consultation with the doctor."

She said the system would not affect jobs as there would still be a need for operators and technicians.

"It will be a matter of e-skilling people. We cannot continue with this archaic system," she said.

Ms Simelane-Zulu said she understood that jobs and training were required for nurses and doctors.

"We have a shortage of doctors in the province and country. We have the Cuba-South Africa doctor training programme which contributes to bringing required skills to South Africa

and focuses on a primary health-care approach. Focusing on primary health care will prevent overcrowded hospitals; clinics will treat patients for issues that do not require hospitalization."

She conceded the budget had fallen in the past decade as fiscal strain and cost-cutting measures left the department wanting in relation to hospital; renovations.

"The long-term problem is if you do not renovate your hospitals, you will be forced to remodel and rebuild.

"Not every hospital will be renovated at the same time and it will be a process which takes time. Ngwelezana had a new wing built around a year ago and was opened about three months ago. King Edward is being renovated."

Dr Pixley Ka Isaka Seme Memorial Hospital has been in the pipeline for years, but due to the lack of resources it kept being postponed.

"While wanting to build new hospitals, you still need to ensure existing hospitals function optimally with access to medication, nurses, doctors."

Addressing issues surrounding medical supplies, she said contracts were required to provide supplies, and budgeting was crucial. "You are required to go into long-term contracts for a specific number of years for a specific number of supplies, and when we run out we are forced to buy supplies." She said tackling National Health Insurance (NHI) in order for everyone to have access to health care and medical support was vital.

"Half the battle will be won. Having NHI will tell our people that you don't always require medical aid to receive treatment. You can use your NHI and visit government institutions in a manner which is affordable for you to get treated," she said.

Ms Simelane-Zulu was with the department of health between

2008 as a parliamentary liaison officer and later joined the office of the premier as the chairperson of the KZN Youth Commission until 2010.

In 2014 she became a member of the health portfolio committee. She is a qualified attorney and provincial secretary of the ANC Women's League.

"People think I don't have experience, but I don't think my lack of medical qualification will be a stumbling block. I have been involved and exposed to the department of health and understand what we have faced and where improvements needed to be made. I am not starting off fresh."

"It's a balancing act. My responsibilities can change and affect the lives of countless people. I do not take this lightly, I take it with humility. Give us a chance and time will tell."

**"This interview was first published in the Sunday Tribune."**

# NEW 65 SEATER BUSES WILL IMPROVE ACCESS TO NON-EMERGENCY HEALTHCARE



**KWAZULU-Natal Health MEC Ms Nomagugu Simelane-Zulu has welcomed the delivery of three brand new 65 seater buses, saying it will boost access to healthcare for patients from rural areas who need to attend high-level health facilities in faraway cities.**

The buses, which are worth R1,7 million each, will be added to the Department's existing fleet of Planned Patient Transport vehicles, and will serve communities in eThekweni, King Cetshwayo and Uthukela districts.

Part of the mandate of the Department's Emergency Medical Services (EMS) is to provide a non-emergency transportation service for the transportation of elective ambulatory patients - and indigent persons with no

other means of transport - from clinics to hospitals; and between hospitals of different levels, in accordance with the district health referral system.

"We are very happy with the buses. I do believe they're going to improve the service that the Department of Health is providing to the patients. Particularly those who need to attend certain appointments in our tertiary

institutions," said MEC Ms Simelane-Zulu.

The MEC did, however, express concern with the manner in which the buses' steps are configured, and says this will have to be fixed.

"The buses are very nice, the seating is quite good. But I was not happy with the steps, because some of them are measured according to men's (long)

strides. We're a government that believes in equity. So, one of the things I've requested is for the steps to be reconfigured because women are definitely going to struggle, whether you are sick or not. But we're going to deal with it. But generally, I'm very happy, and I think this is going to alleviate the complaints that have been there in terms of how we render this type of service."



# EXTREMELY CONCERNED

## MEC SIMELANE-ZULU CALLS FOR URGENT PROBE FOLLOWING THE “SUSPICIOUS” DEMISE OF A 23 YEAR-OLD PREGNANT WOMAN AND HER UNBORN BABY

### GRIEVING FAMILY THANKS MEC FOR SPEEDY INTERVENTION



**KWAZULU-Natal Health MEC Ms Nomagugu Simelane Zulu has promised stern action, should any person(s) be found guilty of negligence in connection with the “suspicious” demise of a 23 year-old mother and her unborn baby at the General Justice Gizenga Memorial Hospital (GJGMH, ex-Stanger Hospital) on Friday (31 May 2019).**

During an unannounced visit to Isithebe Clinic at Mandeni yesterday, MEC Ms Simelane-Zulu announced that an investigation will commence immediately, which will probe circumstances around how the expectant mother, Sithembile Shabane (picture attached), was managed from the time she arrived at the clinic on Friday morning.

The investigation will extend to allegations of staff negligence; the delayed arrival of the ambulance that eventually transported her to GJGMH; as well as how the would-be first-time mother was further managed at the hospital, where she eventually lost her life in the early hours of Saturday (01 June 2019). The incident had sparked anger in the

community, with some residents threatening to march to the clinic and cause damage to it.

A concerned and distraught MEC Ms Simelane-Zulu said that Government had worked hard to reduce the incidence of maternal and child mortality, and that such incidents were major cause for concern.

Reflecting on the incident, the MEC said: “We received a call on Saturday from a resident, as well as from the local councillor, complaining that a young person had died under suspicious circumstances. Unfortunately, this 23 year-old who passed away was pregnant, and lost her life along with her baby

when she got to the hospital.

“The community was quite upset by this as there were allegations of negligence on the part of the staff, so we had to come here to see for ourselves, and engage with the staff and community and find out what actually happened. Fortunately, the family was represented, and the community was there, and we were able to have a discussion.

“We agreed that we are going to get a report in a month’s time, and we will have a report-back session at this clinic. However, there will be investigations by the Department, and we will follow up as soon as we’ve

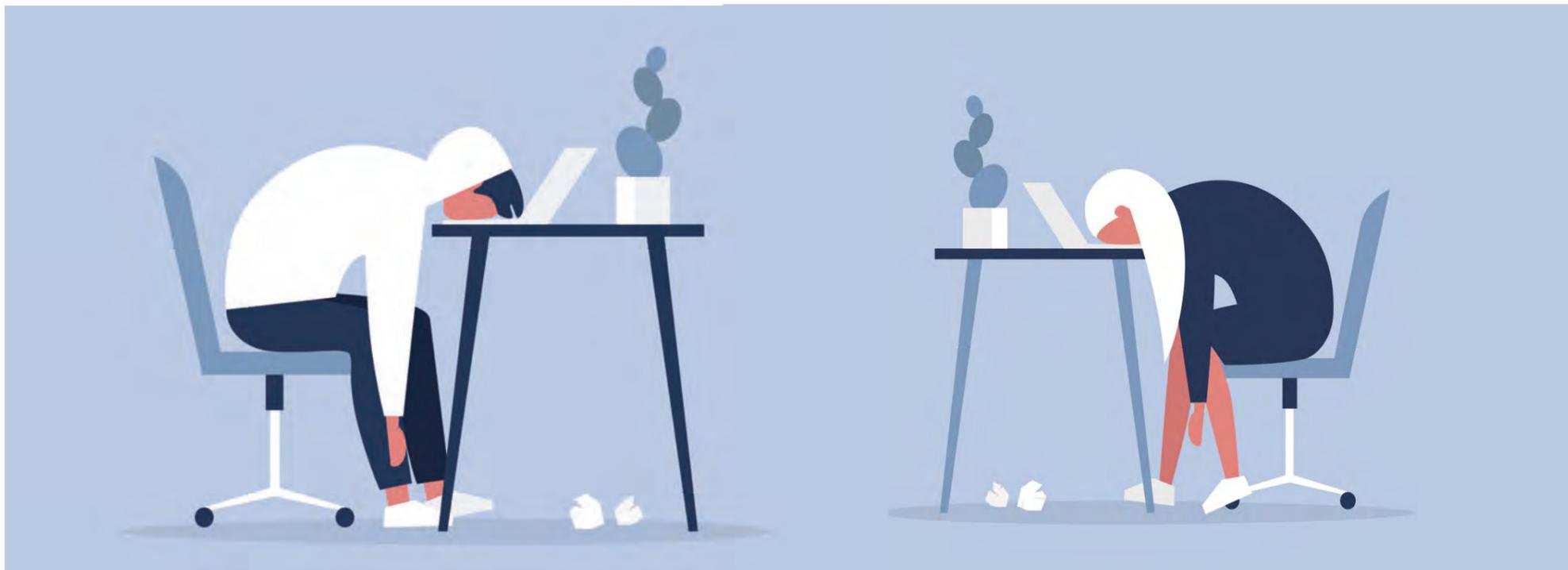
received that report.”

Vusi Hlekwayo, a representative of the Shabane family, thanked the MEC for her speedy intervention.

“We are glad that the MEC has come over to see the situation. But we are sad that we’ve just lost our loved one due to the ‘negligence’ that occurred at a government hospital. It gives us great pain that someone has passed away due to ‘inadequate’ care.

**“We plead with the MEC for this matter not to be taken lightly, and followed through to a point where we are satisfied as a family.”**

# TAKE TIMEOUT BEFORE YOU REACH BURNOUT



**The fast paced environment of the modern workplace has steadily diminished “alone time” where individuals can see to their needs. Acquiring skills to cope with the emotional and mental pressure is crucial to avoid a burnout.**

## What is burnout?

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) Burnout is a state of emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion caused by excessive and prolonged stress. It occurs when you feel overwhelmed, emotionally drained, and are unable to meet constant demands. As the stress continues, you begin to lose the interest and motivation that led you to take on a certain role in the first place. Burnout reduces productivity and saps your energy, leaving you feeling increasingly helpless, hopeless, cynical, and resentful. Eventually, you may feel like you have nothing more to give.

**28 MAY 2019 - Burn-out was included in the 11th Revision of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11) as an occupational phenomenon. It is not classified as a medical condition.**



## Burn-out is defined in ICD-11 as follows:

“Burn-out is a syndrome conceptualized as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed.

### It is characterized by three dimensions:

- feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion;
- increased mental distance from one’s job, or feelings of negativism or cynicism related to one’s job; and
- reduced professional efficacy.

Burn-out refers specifically to phenomena in the occupational context and should not be applied to describe experiences in other areas of life.”

WHO is about to embark on the development of evidence-based guidelines on mental well-being in the workplace.

It is best to always evaluate how you are doing at work as some jobs and careers are demanding and time consuming. Take timeout, allow both body and mind to reboot every once in a while. A healthy mind equals a healthy body and a healthy individual makes an invaluable contribution to any team he/she is part of.

Source: WHO

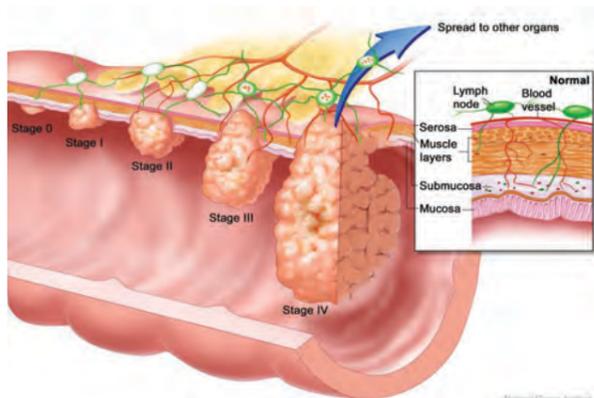
# INTERNATIONAL CANCER SURVIVOR'S DAY – 3 June

## 1 What is cancer and how does it develop?

Cancer is a disease where the cells grow abnormally, out of control, in the wrong place.

Our bodies are made from billions of cells, like bricks make a house. The cells in our bodies that make up the heart, lungs, kidneys, muscles and skin are all quite different.

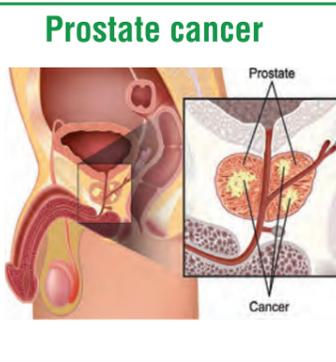
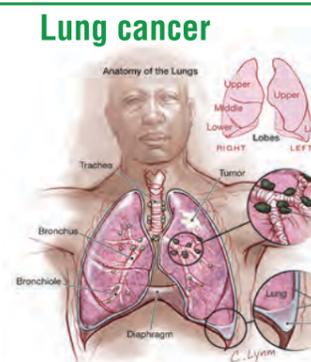
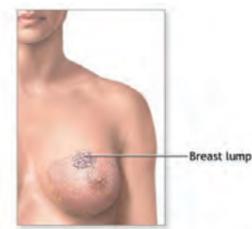
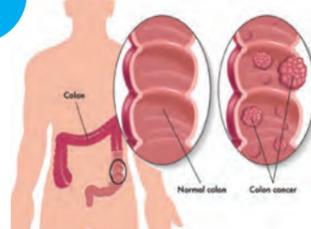
When cells are damaged, they can start growing in a way that is not normal. The uncontrolled cells will form a lump called a *tumour*, or they travel inside the blood vessels (*leukemia*) or in the lymph nodes (*lymphoma*).



Cancer can affect men, women and children, young and old, rich and poor. You cannot catch cancer from someone else nor give it to others. With new methods of treatment, many more people recover from cancer now.

You can have cancer anywhere in the body, including the bones and the skin.

## 2 Bowel cancer Breast cancer

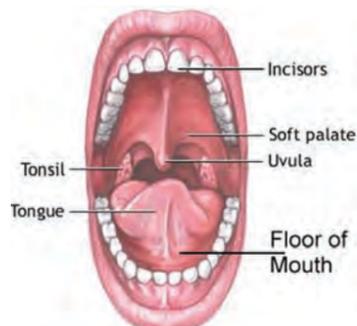
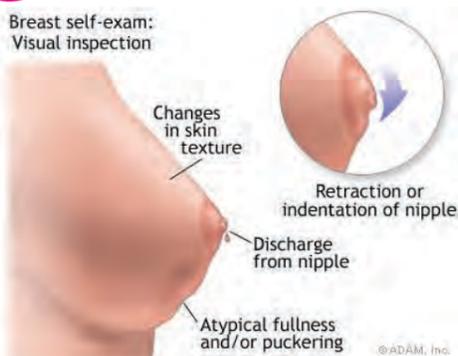


### How do I know that I have cancer?

If you have one of the following problems for over 3 weeks and it is not getting better with ordinary treatment, you have to visit a doctor or a clinic.

- CAUTION:**
1. **C**hange in bowel or bladder habits (pain, difficulty urinating, blood)
  2. **A** sore that does not heal
  3. **U**nusual bleeding or discharge from private parts (women)
  4. **T**hickening or a lump in the breast or elsewhere (neck, armpit, groin)
  5. **I**ndigestion or difficulty swallowing
  6. **O**bvious weight loss, sweating at night, bone pains
  7. **N**agging cough or hoarseness, sometimes with blood when you cough

## 3 Breast exam Sores in mouth



### Breast exam

### Sores in mouth

### How does cancer develop?

Cells are constantly renewing themselves. Each day cells die and are then replaced by new cells; this is how we stay healthy. But sometimes during this renewing, a healthy cell changes into a cancer cell and starts growing out of control.

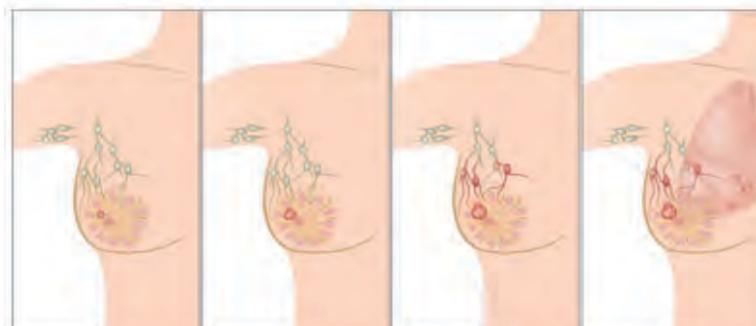
### Tumour growth

When the tumour grows, some of the cancer cells damage normal cells, and can then move into different parts of the body. The cells that travel into other parts of the body are called *metastases*.

These cancer cells travel through the blood or the lymphatic system to distant parts of the body where they form new tumours. In this way, breast cancer can spread to the lung or the brain.

The doctor will speak of "stages". This explains how much cancer is in a person's body and where it is located. Stage 1 and 2 mean that the cancer is in an early phase, still small and responding well to treatment. Stage 3 and 4 show that the cancer cells have travelled in nearby other organs, or have spread through the blood vessels; it is more difficult to treat.

## 4 Stages of Breast Cancer



### How does the doctor find cancer?

First, the doctor will listen to your story and do a physical examination. Then he can use a number of ways to find out if it is cancer or not.

- **Biopsy:** A small piece of the tumour is cut out and looked at under a microscope to determine the type of cancer.
- **Endoscopy:** Endoscopy is a medical procedure where a doctor puts a tube-like instrument into the body to look inside. There are many types of endoscopy, each of which is designed for looking at a certain part of the body.
- **CT scan or MRI scan:** The machine takes many pictures (x-rays) of the body taken from different angles. These pictures are combined to give a detailed picture of internal organs. Doctors are then able to look for tumours. The CT and MRI scan are painless.
- **Mammogram:** is a special type of low dose x-ray used to detect breast cancer. The breast is compressed (squeezed by a machine) during the procedure and so it may be a bit uncomfortable.
- **Bloods:** Sometimes cancer cells can be detected in the blood, and the doctor can see that there is cancer somewhere in the body. They are called *blood markers*.

# INTERNATIONAL CANCER SURVIVOR'S DAY – 3 June

## Why do I have cancer?

It is difficult to know why certain people get cancer, and others don't. Doctors use the term *risk factors*; things that damage the cells so they can grow into tumours.

### Risk factors are:

- smoking cigarettes or using tobacco products like snuff, pipe or chewing tobacco.
- having been sunburned often
- some viruses: HIV, HPV and Hepatitis B virus
- unhealthy lifestyle: being overweight, limited physical exercise, too much alcohol, too many sugars and red meat, not enough vegetables and fruit.
- *inheritance*: a family history of cancer (some of your close relatives (father, mother, brothers or sisters) have had cancer: breast, bowel, melanoma and ovarian cancer)
- pollution, and toxins in the environment (dirty air and water, smoke and chemicals that we breathe in).

## Why is it important to go to a doctor when you notice symptoms?

(See "CAUTION")

Many people recover from cancer every year, completely or temporarily.

Doing so is easier when cancer's diagnosed at an early stage as treatment is often simpler and more likely to be effective. So finding cancer early can make a real difference.

Sometimes, people put off seeing their doctor because they're worried about what the doctor might find. But it's important to remember that advances in the way cancer is diagnosed and treated have led to real improvements over the years. The earlier, the better!

## PROSTATE CANCER

### What every male should know

The prostate gland is a small organ that is found only in men. The gland is located below the urinary bladder, and the urethra runs through it. The normal function of the prostate gland is to make part of the seminal fluid or semen that is released during ejaculation. The semen also carries and nourishes the sperm. The prostate can be affected by cancerous or non-cancerous enlargement or infection.

Cancer of the prostate develops in the prostate gland and the cancer cells may eventually spread outside the gland to other

parts of the body. Prostate cancer is generally slow growing and progressive. It is one of the leading cancers in men worldwide,

and is the number two cause of cancer deaths among men in South Africa.

### Risk Factors:

Although the actual cause of prostate cancer is not known, the following risk factors have been identified:

**Age** is the major risk factor. Men over 50 years are at risk. More than 80% of all prostate cancers are diagnosed in men over the age of 65 years.

**Family history / Genetic factors** If a father or brother had prostate cancer, there is an increased risk of getting the disease

**Unhealthy Diet** There is a relationship between a diet high in animal fat and protein (especially red meat), and prostate cancer.

### Reducing the risk of Prostate Cancer

The following guidelines should be observed:

Annual screening from the age of 50 years

If there is family history of prostate cancer, annual screening is advisable from the age of 45 years

Diet low in animal fat and protein is advisable The health professional would advise you to have a blood test and a rectal examination.

The blood test would measure the level of a protein called Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) in the blood. If the blood test results show an increased level of PSA, you will be referred for further investigation.

Any condition affecting the prostate can cause the PSA level to rise. A rise in PSA does not mean that the person has cancer.

Rectal examination would confirm the presence or absence of prostate cancer. This examination generally discourages men from seeking medical advice. It is vital to understand that this examination must be performed for your health and well-being.

### The Importance of early detection:

The early detection of prostate cancer greatly improves the success of treatment. It is your responsibility to look after your own health. You should seek advice from a health professional.

### Treatment:

Treatment would be appropriate for the diagnosed condition .

### Remember:

Ongoing pain without explanation requires medical attention.

Should you have any concerns about your health, please talk to a health professional at your nearest clinic.

# MATTERS OF THE HEART



## World Heart Rhythm Week is an annual awareness week that runs from 3 June till 10 June.

During this awareness week patients, charities and health professionals come together to promote effective diagnosis and treatment of heart arrhythmia which is a disorder affecting the rhythm of the heartbeat.

### The disorder is broken down as follows:

- Slow heartbeat: bradycardia.
- Fast heartbeat: tachycardia.
- Irregular heartbeat: flutter or fibrillation.
- Early heartbeat: premature contraction.

### A number of factors can cause the heart to work incorrectly or irregular, these include:

- Alcohol abuse
- Diabetes
- Drug abuse
- Excessive coffee consumption
- Hypertension (high blood pressure)
- Smoking

If you notice any of the symptoms above, it is important that you visit a nearby clinic for a check-up.

# SUGAR IS SWEET BUT NOT FOR YOUR TEETH



### DID YOU KNOW?

Oral diseases are the most common non-communicable diseases (NCDs)

Red velvet cupcakes with fresh cream, a rich chocolate bar with walnuts, a decadent milkshake garnished with marshmallows, toffee sauce with sprinkles of fudge. Everyone loves a sugary snack every once in a while. However, as tasty as these treats are, it's common knowledge that you can't have too much of a good thing. The sweeter that snack, the more sugar it is likely to have and thus the more likely you are to develop cavities.

## Why Should Cavities Be Such a Big Deal?

Firstly, unlike milk teeth —the first teeth we develop as children —the second set of teeth we grow are irreplaceable. That means once you damage them and have them removed, you cannot grow a new set so repairing them or completely replacing them can be expensive.

Secondly, cavities left unchecked can turn into more serious infections. Once bacteria have eaten into a tooth and created a hole, small pieces of food and the bacteria themselves can gain entry into your gums, leading to other diseases and disorders that limit an individual's capacity in biting, chewing, smiling, speaking, and their psychosocial wellbeing.

## What Can I Do To Prevent Cavities?

- **Back to Basics:** Brush your teeth twice a day, in the morning and before you sleep. After you have brushed your teeth, do not eat anything or drink anything except water.
- **A Well-balanced Diet:**
  - o low in free sugars to prevent development of dental caries, premature tooth loss and other diet-related NCDs;
  - o with adequate fruit and vegetable intake, which may have a protective role in oral cancer prevention;
- **Reducing Smoking:** The use of smokeless tobacco including chewing of areca nuts, and alcohol consumption to reduce the risk of oral cancers, periodontal (teeth-related) disease and tooth loss; and
- The use of **Protective Equipment** when doing sports and travelling in motor vehicles to reduce the risk of facial injuries.

# HEALTH INNOVATIONS THAT CHANGED THE WORLD: PENICILLIN: Infection Warrior

Penicillin has been a warrior in fighting infections in people's lives for many years. It is a collection of antibiotics that eliminate infection causing bacteria from multiplying. 91 years after its first use, it remains one of the commonly used antibiotics that treat a variety of infectious diseases. Penicillin saves millions of lives each year worldwide by enabling the treatment of bacterial infections like:

- ear, skin, gum, mouth, and throat infections
- pneumonia
- respiratory tract infections
- syphilis,
- gonorrhea
- many wound and childbirth infections

This lifesaving discovery was made by Alexander Fleming, Professor of Bacteriology in the year 1928. It came in a time where there was no effective treatment for infections. Hospitals were full of people with blood

poisoning contracted from a cut or a scratch, and doctors could do little for them. Its discovery ushered in a new age of medicine. It was hailed as a "miracle drug" that would eliminate infectious diseases. Today there are many types of

natural and synthetic types of penicillin, which are used to treat a wide range of illnesses.

Source: Livescience.com



# KZN HEALTH CROWNED GAMES CHAMPIONS

The KZN Department of Health was emerged as the overall winner of the Inter-Departmental Games held recently in Pietermaritzburg, earning 7 trophies. The tournament was held from 31st May to 01 June 2019, where all KZN Government Departments participated and played against each other in various sporting codes.



In the Men's 5km run, the Department came 1st and 3rd, receiving a gold and bronze medal respectively. The women did not disappoint either, coming in 1st in the 5km race.



## OTHER VICTORIES WERE:

- 1st position** in relay (males) and got gold medals
- 1st position** in 100m (males) and got silver medals
- 1st position** in 100m (females) and got silver medals
- 1st position** in umlalaba and got a trophy and gold medal
- 2nd position** in netball over 35 and got a trophy and silver medals
- 3rd position** in netball under 35
- 2nd position** in soccer under 35 and got a trophy and silver medals
- 2nd position** in soccer over 35 and got trophy and silver medals
- 2nd position** in ladies' soccer and got a trophy and silver medals



The Deputy Director, Mr Dan Dumisa expressed his pride and said, "On behalf of the Department I would like to thank all the district directors, managers and supervisors for the support they gave to participants as well as sports co-ordinators and participants in their outstanding performance. May God bless them". He also urged his component to continue in its endeavour to keep employees healthy and productive.





# GALLERY



UNANNOUNCED VISIT TO ISITHEBE CLINIC AT MANDENI



DELIVERY OF THREE BRAND NEW 65 SEATER BUSES



INTER-DEPARTMENTAL GAMES HELD IN PIETERMARITZBURG





**health**

Department:  
Health  
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

**COMPILED BY:**

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