



HEALTH
KwaZulu-Natal

CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS

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National Polio Immunisation Campaign 21- 29 July 2007

The Department of Health in KwaZulu-Natal calls on parents and guardians to immunise children under the age of five during the Polio Immunisation Campaign starting from Saturday, 21 July 2007, until 29 July 2007 in all clinics and hospitals.

The campaign seeks to give children booster dose that will provide children with additional protection against polio. All children will receive oral polio vaccine during the campaign. It is important to bring the child during the campaign. These extra drops will protect the children against the polio virus. Parents should take note that the vaccines given during the mass campaigns do not replace the routine childhood immunisation schedule.

Immunisation will be available at every clinic or immunisation post. These immunisation venues will be displayed on posters at the clinics and hospitals. This will be the second round of immunisation following the initial campaign in May where children received the first dose of the immunisation against polio and measles.

The reason that two doses of polio vaccine are given is that there are three strains of polio, usually the body responds to one strain at a time, to make sure that they develop antibodies to all three strains, two doses are required.

What is Polio?

Polio also called poliomyelitis is a highly infectious disease caused by a virus. It invades the nervous system and can cause total paralysis in a matter of hours. It can strike at any age, but affects mainly children under the age of five years. Once established in the intestine, polio virus can enter the blood stream and invade the central nervous system and destroy the nerves cells. The limb becomes floppy and lifeless.

Symptoms

The virus enters the body through the mouth and multiplies in the intestine. Initial symptoms are fever, fatigue, tiredness, headache, vomiting, and stiffness in the neck and pain in the limbs. Polio virus can be spread widely before cases of paralysis are seen. Polio is a viral illness that in 95 percent of cases actually produces no symptoms at all. As most people infected with polio have no signs of illness, they are never aware they have been infected. After initial infection with poliovirus, the virus is

shed excrement for several weeks. During that time polio can spread rapidly through the community. Polio can be diagnosed by blood test or culture.

Prevention of polio

There is no cure for polio; it can only be prevented through immunisation. Polio vaccine given multiple times, almost always protects a child for life. It is vital that the community play a role in creating a polio free generation, by bringing the kids to the health facilities, clinic points and community centres such as malls during the campaign.

Contagiousness

Polio is transmitted primarily through the ingestion of material contaminated with virus found in stool. People are advised to wash hands each time they visit toilets and not to drink contaminated water.

The objective of the Department's mass immunisation campaign is to give children booster doses that will provide them with additional protection against polio and measles. This is in line with the goal set by World Health Organisation (WHO) for global polio and measles eradication.

Your support and assistance is needed to make our province and country polio and measles free.

STOP POLIO! STOP MEASLES! IMMUNISE!

ISSUED BY:

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