

# KZN health MEC's message to festive season revelers: avoid anxiety of looking for morning-after pills by abstaining or having safe sex at all times

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*Dual Protection*

KZN HEALTH MEC Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo has expressed concern over reports that traditionally, the demand for emergency morning-after pills is said to increase during the festive holiday season. This, says the MEC, is a worrying sign that some people are not heeding the call to use Dual Protection (a combination of condoms and female contraceptive methods) in order to avoid unplanned or unwanted pregnancies, as well as sexually-transmitted infections.

In recent years there have been news reports where independent pharmacists have been quoted saying that they usually see higher demand for emergency morning-after pills during the festive season.

“The reported increase in the demand for morning-after pills is more of a worry because we as the Department of Health offer condoms to the public free of charge.

“The morning-after pill may prevent pregnancy (although it is not 100% safe), but it does not prevent pregnancy and sexually-transmitted infections including HIV.

“We wish to remind the public that the best way for a person to keep themselves free from the risk of having an unwanted pregnancy or contracting a sexually-transmitted infection is by either abstaining from sex or using Dual Protection, which is a combination of condoms and female contraceptive methods at all times.

“Morning-after pills are for emergencies, and may not always be 100% effective. They also come with the added stress of finding and taking them on time, whereas you may find that because of the holidays, the chemist may be closed.”

MEC Dhlomo also wishes to remind the public about the dangers of alcohol as a contributor to poor judgement.

“There are many things that alcohol is able to preserve, but dignity is not one of them. When you are under the influence of alcohol, you have less inhibitions, and may end up doing things in the heat of the moment that you may regret tomorrow. So, we are urging our compatriots, especially young people, not to behave recklessly just because we are in the festive season. They must remember that this is just a time like any other. You must not make poor decisions that will impact negatively on the rest of your life, just because it’s the festive season. Life must still continue. So, planning and investing in a better future with a long and healthy life, must start today.”