

# Vaccination drive hits Western Cape amidst growing measles outbreak in SA

In the midst of a growing measles outbreak in the Cape Metro, the City of Cape Town's health department is urging parents to vaccinate their children.



Source: Wikimedia Commons.

The outbreak was declared by The National Institute for Communicable Diseases.

The most recent number of measles cases in six affected provinces has risen past 600, a tally which cites this as SA's worst outbreak in more than a decade.

There is currently a national measles vaccination campaign under way, which kicked off after an outbreak in five other provinces. Children between the ages of six months and 14 years and 11 months will receive an additional measles vaccination at public schools, crèches and City of Cape Town clinics.

Since 6 February 2023, 168,056 measles vaccines have been administered across the province to children in this age group.

"The vaccine is safe and provides lifelong immunity against the disease. We can protect our children from serious complications of measles such as diarrhoea, dehydration, middle-ear infection, brain infection (encephalitis), blindness and

even death," said the City's mayoral committee member for community services and health, Patricia Van der Ross.

City Health staff are visiting public schools and crèches to drop off the measles campaign pamphlets and consent forms.

"Parents and caregivers are urged to complete the consent form for their children as they cannot be vaccinated without consent. Children can also be taken to their nearest clinic for vaccination. The measles vaccine is very effective at preventing measles, and with a declared outbreak, it is our duty to ensure our children are protected," said Van der Ross.

If a child is absent from crèche or school on vaccination day, parents or caregivers can take the child to their nearest clinic where the additional measles vaccine will be administered.

Currently, children receive the first measles vaccination at the age of six months and the second one at 12 months, as part of the national immunisation schedule.

Persons of any age who are not vaccinated (and have not had previous infection) can get measles. The symptoms include:

- A high fever
- A rash
- Runny nose
- Cough
- Red and watery eyes

Anyone who has these symptoms should be taken to their nearest clinic or GP so that the diagnosis can be confirmed with a blood test.

The vaccine is free at all City clinics.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>