



GAUTENG PROVINCE

HEALTH
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEDIA STATEMENT

WEDNESDAY, 04 OCTOBER 2023

GAUTENG HEALTH OUTBREAK RESPONSE TEAM INTENSIFIES AWARENESS DRIVE FOLLOWING FOOD POISONING INCIDENT IN SOWETO

The Gauteng Department of Health (GDoH)'s Outbreak Response team has intensified awareness in the community following the incident of food poisoning in Naledi, Soweto on Sunday, 01 October, that resulted in the death of two school children with three others having to receive medical treatment.

The team spent today (Wednesday, 04 October) at Naledi and surrounding areas engaging locals and conducting health education about food handling, preparation, storage and food safety, the importance of checking food expiry labels, hand washing before handling food and to sensitise them on what to do when presenting with food poisoning symptoms such as cramping, nausea, vomiting or diarrhoea. The health education also covers spaza shops in the area and includes checking compliance in terms of the Foodstuffs, Cosmetics And Disinfectants Act and food labelling regulations.

“We pass our sincere condolences to the families that have lost their little ones and wish a speedy recovery to those who are still receiving medical care. The tragic incident is another painful reminder that we must do more to ensure greater public awareness and increase the level of alertness when it comes to the foodstuffs communities are exposed to,” remarked Gauteng MEC for Health and Wellness Nomantu Nkomo-Ralehoko calling on all spheres of government to work together to enforce compliance with the relevant laws.

The outbreak response team on Tuesday and Wednesday visited the affected families to provide support, counselling and to conduct further investigations in the households.

Meanwhile, out of the five affected children, a 3-year-old boy is recovering well from home, two are currently admitted at Chris Hani Baragwanath Academic Hospital – a 4-year-old male who is recovering well and is due for discharge and a 6-year-old girl who remains critical but stable in ICU.

The department is urging the public to visit their nearest health facilities when they present with symptoms such as: vomiting, sudden chest pains, body ache/weakness, fever or foam in the mouth.

The outbreak response team comprising of, Environmental Health Practitioners (health inspectors) from the municipality and the province, Ward-Based Outreach Teams, Communicable Disease Control specialists, Surveillance Officer, Infection Control and Health Promoters will continue to conduct awareness campaigns in Naledi and surrounding areas on Thursday and Friday (5-6 October).

The police have since taken samples for further processing. The source of the food poisoning is not confirmed subject to the police investigation.

Ends/

Issued by the Gauteng Department of Health

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