



GAUTENG PROVINCE

HEALTH
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEDIA STATEMENT

TUESDAY, 16 APRIL 2024

GAUTENG HEALTH CONCERNED ABOUT THE ALARMING RISE IN INCIDENTS OF FOOD POISONING

The Gauteng Department of Health (GDoH) is deeply concerned about the alarming rise in incidents of food poisoning, particularly when it affects children.

On Monday, 15 April 2024, a total of 41 children between the ages of 3 to 5 years, who have allegedly consumed rat poison mistaking it for candy, have been receiving medical treatment at Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital.

Upon medical examination of the 41 children, a total of 17 were admitted yesterday afternoon at Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital for overnight observation, while the remaining 24 were discharged home in a satisfactory condition. This incident is reported to have taken place at a preschool and investigations are being conducted to establish more facts.

Another food poisoning incident has been reported where 10 people (two adults and 8 children) were referred to Thelle Mogoerane Regional Hospital in Ekurhuleni, from Ramokonopi Community Health Centre on Monday night, the 15th of April 2024. The two adults were discharged after receiving medical care last night, and two children were also discharged this morning while the six remaining children are still admitted in the hospital and in a stable condition.

These two incidents bring the total number of the food borne incidents recorded cumulatively to 863 which have sadly claimed 11 lives since the first incident in October 2023. The Department calls on all arms of society particularly parents and caregivers to play their part in protecting children from the risks of food poisoning to safeguard their health and prevent further incidents.

The GDoH's public health mobilisation team continues to drive educational campaigns in communities particularly in the townships, informal settlements, and hostels to educate communities about the dangers of food borne diseases and empower them with food safety tips such as food handling, preparation, storage, the importance of checking food expiry labels and hand washing before handling food. Today, the GDoH's public health unit dispatched a team comprising an epidemiologist, health promotion and environmental health officers to the facility to assess the environment, advise where there are gaps etc.

Furthermore, the Department implore community members to play their part and enforce adherence to food safety practices to prevent such incidents in the future and protect the wellbeing of the children.

The Gauteng Department of Health will continue working tirelessly to address food safety concerns and provide the necessary support and resources to our communities. Those experiencing symptoms such as fever, chills, cramping, nausea, vomiting or diarrhoea

which may be bloody in some cases, stomach-aches, sudden swelling face, and body aches/ weakness, are encouraged to visit their nearest health facilities for medical attention.

Ends//

Issued by the Gauteng Department of Health

For more information please contact:

Khutso Rabothata, Acting Head of Communication: 060 997 7066 or healthmediaenquiries@gauteng.gov.za	Tshepo Shawa, Spokesperson for the MEC for Health: 072 222 6333 or Tshepo.Shawa@gauteng.gov.za
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