



## **GAUTENG PROVINCE**

HEALTH  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

### **MEDIA STATEMENT**

**FRIDAY, 05 MAY 2023**

#### **MEC NKOMO-RALEHOKO CALLS ON THE PUBLIC TO PRACTICE HAND HYGIENE TO PREVENT INFECTIONS AND DISEASES**

As we observe World Hand Hygiene Day, the Gauteng MEC for Health and Wellness, Nomantu Nkomo-Ralehoko has urged members of the public to practice hand hygiene at all times as it has proven to prevent and control infections and diseases.

World Hand Hygiene Day is observed annually on 5 May to increase awareness about hand hygiene standards at home, the workplace and healthcare facilities, thereby protecting healthcare workers and communities from infections.

The theme for this year's World Hand Hygiene Day is "Accelerate action together. Save Lives – Clean Your Hands", which emphasises accelerating the needed actions by working together and reducing the spread of infection and antimicrobial resistance in healthcare settings.

MEC Nkomo-Ralehoko said that thoroughly washing hands with soap and water has saved many lives, and it is critical that the public and healthcare make this important life-saving practice a habit.

"Practicing hand hygiene has proven to prevent and control infections and diseases throughout the years. During the COVID-19 pandemic, regularly washing hands with soap and water was one of the golden rules that prevented the spread of the infectious virus.

"We are currently facing a cholera outbreak in the province, and it is important that we encourage communities to practice proper hand hygiene which includes thorough washing of hands with water and soap before and after using the bathroom and also when preparing or eating food," said MEC Nkomo-Ralehoko.

Currently, a total of 11 Cholera cases and one death have been confirmed in Gauteng.

It is important that people wash their hands before, during and after preparing food, before and after eating food, before and after caring for someone at home who is sick with vomiting or diarrhea and before and after treating a cut or wound.

It is also important to wash hands after changing nappies or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet, after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing, after touching an animal, animal feed or animal waste, after handling pet food or pet treats and after touching garbage.

As part of efforts to ensure that the Gauteng Department of Health curbs the spread of infections and diseases associated with poor hygiene practices, Environmental Health specialists and health promoters have been in townships, informal settlements and hostels (TISH) to educate street food vendors about ensuring that their customers are given soap and water to wash their hands before serving them food.

**Ends/**

**Issued by the Gauteng Department of Health**

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