

YOUR HEALTH

THE annual Polio and Measles Campaign runs from 5 – 13 May and from 9 – 17 June. In this, the first of a two-part series on the diseases, we focus on measles.

What is measles?

A highly contagious infection of the respiratory system.

What causes measles?

It is caused by the measles virus.

How do you get measles?

Measles is very contagious. It's air borne, that is, you can breathe in tiny droplets that contain the measles virus. An uninfected person can get measles simply by breathing the air in a room where an infected person has been. You can also get infected by direct contact with fluid from the nose or mouth of an infected person. The virus can live in the air for two hours after an infected person leaves a room. Infected persons are usually infectious to others even before symptoms appear.

Signs and symptoms

Measles symptoms usually show up in two stages. Stage 1: runny nose, cough, and a slight fever. As the infection progresses, the person's eyes become red and sensitive to light, and the fever rises. Stage 2: Begins after three to seven days. The fever is very high, and a red blotchy rash appears. The rash usually starts on the face and then spreads to the chest, back, arms and legs, including the palms and soles of the feet. The rash lasts for four to seven days. Small white spots might appear on the gums and inside the cheeks.

How is measles diagnosed?

It can usually be diagnosed by symptoms. A blood test can confirm the diagnosis.

Who is at risk?

Children who have not been immunised are the main risk group. Infants are generally protected from measles for six to eight months after birth, due to immunity passed on from their mothers.

Treatment

If measles is suspected visit the nearest clinic or doctor for confirmation and management.

Additional tips

Keep children away from other children and pregnant women. Control temperature by sponging the child with luke warm water and give the child liquids. Monitor the child's temperature and consult a clinic or doctor if it does not settle.

Prevention

Immunise your child.

For more information contact your nearest clinic.

Compiled by the eThekweni Health Department

Business fair starts today

ALAN COOPER

SMALL businesses in South Durban come under the spotlight from today with the first of a series of council-backed regional small business fairs starting at the Umlazi Megacity.

The South Durban Basin (SDB) Small Business Fair runs until Sunday with a programme of workshops designed to cater to the needs of small, medium and micro enterprises (SMME) in the area and providing a platform to showcase their products and services.

Small entrepreneurs in other areas need not feel left out, though. The municipality's Business Support Unit (BSU) in partnership with the area-based teams in Inanda, KwaMashu, Ntuzuma (Ink) and various rural areas will be bringing similar fairs to their own areas in the coming months.

This weekend's South Durban fair and the upcoming

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Ink SMME Fair: 22 – 24 June at the J.L. Dube Stadium, Inanda. Contact Thuli Mthembu of Vezubuhle Events at Tel: 031 303 8218; Fax: 086 654 4339; or Cell: 073 408 7065

Rural ABM SMME Fair: The proposed dates and venues are: 1. North: 30 June, at Mount View Hall, Verulam. 2. West: 5 July, at the Pinetown Civic Centre. 3. South: 7 July, at the Umbumbulu municipal offices. Contact Zodwa Msimang of Ikhono Communications at Tel: 031 266 9937; Fax: 031 266 6054; Cell: 082 554 3150

The Main SMME Fair: It takes place at the Durban Exhibition Centre from 28 – 30 September. Contact the Business Support Unit, c/o Winile Mntungwa at Tel: 031 311 4500; 031 311 4442; Fax: 031 332 6408; or Cell: 083 449 6005.

Ink fair have been limited to 200 exhibitors, while the three one-day rural fairs will attract some 50 exhibitors each and will focus more on workshops and information sharing. All these efforts will culminate in a bumper central fair at the Durban Exhibition Centre at the end

of September with some 300 exhibitors expected.

Mayor Obed Mlaba said the fairs, now in their ninth year, were primary networking hubs for small, medium and micro enterprises.

"I appeal to the business sector, especially big business to support these fairs. The

fairs provide opportunities for networking and bridge building. It is time we started to grow some African millionaires in eThekweni; these fairs are fertile ground," Mlaba said.

Support

His call was echoed by BSU Acting Head Philip Sithole: "Big business and industry are urged to come on board and participate in the business linkage programme, as it is only with their support that small business will be able to develop to their full potential."

This weekend's fair boasts an event packed programme, with experts in various fields hosting workshops on a wide range of topics.

Small business owners will get tips on how to apply for government and municipal tenders. They'll also hear about the latest opportunities in the fast growing tourism industry. Represent-

tatives of several banks will present updates on small business funding.

Delegates will also get advice on franchising, how to make best use of the Proudly South African logo, starting a new business, grooming and business acumen.

All this will be in addition to presentations from the municipal and provincial business and investment promotion agencies.

An added bonus for attendees will be the chance to win prizes in categories such as young entrepreneur, best stand, best quality in arts and handcraft, and best innovative business.

The prizes and other backing for the fair come courtesy of several sponsors, including East Coast Radio, Flexible Workspace, BMW Supertech South Coast Road, Coca Cola, Damelin and Boston City College.

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See our special SMME supplement inside

A taste of the working world

GUGU BLOSE and
THEMBA KHUMALO

THE municipality's Water and Sanitation department recently played host to more than 200 youngsters from schools and tertiary institutions as part of a "Take a Boy Learner to Work Day" initiative.

It was aimed at encouraging pupils to study maths and science – necessary for further study in fields such as engineering. The department said the shortage of skills in the engineering sector made such initiatives necessary.

Sithababiso Myeni, a Vukuzakhe High School pupil who took part in the day, said he was pleased to have learnt about career avenues open to him through the city.

"It was so exciting to visit the purification plant because we saw chemical engineers and electrical engineers. It was interesting to realise you could study towards both those careers and get a job at eThekweni

Water and Sanitation. I will definitely think about engineering as a career now."

The day's activities included a visit to the Engineering Services Contact Centre on Prior Road where pupils were shown the ropes by contact centre supervisor Caroline Ramsahar and Resh Maharaj of eThekweni Water and Sanitation.

Freedom Khubisa, a pupil at Vukuzakhe High School, said: "It is interesting to see how you can get all the information you need from the computer. I have learnt a lot of things and have been inspired to consider studying engineering."

Maharaj said: "This is the second year the programme is running and it has grown immensely, with the numbers of children involved almost doubling.

"We are happy with the turn-out and believe the event was a success. High school pupils and tertiary level institutions students took part."



HANDS ON: Caroline Ramsahar, of the city's Water and Sanitation contact centre, explains how the centre's system works to Vukuzakhe High School pupils Freedom Khubisa, Manqoba Miya, and Sithababiso Myeni
Picture THEMBA KHUMALO

Plan to beat toxic water drum threat

SHAMESHNI GOVENDER

A PROJECT is being established to clean up the informal trade in used chemical drums, which has been putting the public's health at risk.

The city's Health Department, Business Support Unit, Durban Solid Waste, Communications Unit, and the Responsible Container Management Association of Southern Africa have begun work on the "Umgqomo Opephile" (Safe Drum) project, which encourages the use of safe, clean drums.

The plan is to educate drum traders about the risks associated with residual chemicals inside used chemical drums. The project will also promote self-policing of the drum trade.

Informal traders at Mansel Road, South Coast Road and Durban station have long been buying used drums from chemical industries in eThekweni and beyond.

But increasingly there are concerns about the cleanliness of these drums.

City officials have found that 80% of the drums examined at any given time

at the informal market contain residual chemicals.

Simply rinsing them does not remove the residue, which impregnates the internal plastic surface of the drums, and if used as a water container will leach out into the water, with the risk of chemical poisoning.

Storm water

Street traders clean drums and empty the washing water into the storm water drains, potentially putting the public's health at risk and harming the environment.

The traders have reported chemicals burns and inhaling strong fumes.

There are also fears that some traders are buying drums from people who steal them from industry.

The Health Department is involved in monitoring this, and with other departments has come up with plans to intervene, which will benefit the traders and the public.

There is a great demand for plastic drums, especially in rural areas where they are used to store water and foodstuffs. Workshops will be held with informal traders to

teach them about the risks of handling drums, and to decide on what to do so as to benefit their business and protect the public.

The forming of co-operatives will be encouraged to ensure safe business and to alleviate poverty.

The workshops will promote the sale of virgin drums and develop and implement a strategy that is sustainable and self-policing.

The project is expected to start in July and run until June 2008, after which it will be self-policing.

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