

ENTERIC DISEASES**Rotavirus**

Rotavirus is a common childhood diarrhoeal infection with a seasonal pattern, peaking during the cooler, drier months of the year. Rotavirus is transmitted via the fecal-oral route with children <2 years primarily affected. Clinical symptoms include the sudden onset of vomiting followed by watery diarrhoea, which may result in severe life-threatening dehydration. Since rotavirus vaccine introduction in 2009, the annual rotavirus season in South Africa occurs from late June to mid-August. The rotavirus season usually starts in the Western Cape and migrates towards Gauteng and Mpumalanga provinces a few weeks later. Diarrhoeal syndromic surveillance is conducted at three sites as part of the NICD GERMS-SA platform (Pelonomi Hospital, Free State; Klerksdorp/Tshepong hospitals North West; and Red Cross Children's Hospital, Western Cape) as well as three additional sites as part of the ANDEMIA project

(Kalafong Hospital, Gauteng; Mapulaneng and Matikwane hospitals, Mpumalanga). The surveillance targets all patients presenting with diarrhoea at participating sites. Stool samples are collected for molecular testing for enteric viruses, bacteria and parasites. While the 2020 season was very low (6%; 19/338), the 2021 season recorded a 15% rotavirus prevalence (114/761) driven by G2P[4] strains. Recently, rotavirus was detected in specimens from the Western Cape (6%; 8/139), mostly G3P[8] strains. The detection in the Western Cape Province indicates that the rotavirus season 2022 cases will be increasing soon. Healthcare providers are reminded that children should receive rotavirus vaccine at 6 and 14 weeks of age, and that children who have missed rotavirus vaccination can be vaccinated until 8 months of age. In addition, adequate supplies of oral rehydration solution should be ensured.