

QUICK UPDATES

Measles, South Africa

The ongoing measles outbreak which began in October 2022, has resulted in a cumulative total of 421 laboratory-confirmed cases (as of 26 January 2022). The majority of cases (406/421; 96.4%) have been reported from the five provinces that have declared measles outbreaks, namely Limpopo (n=149), Mpumalanga (n=81), North West (n=133), Gauteng (n=18) and Free State (n=18). For updated case numbers and more information on the outbreak, please visit the NICD alerts page (<https://www.nicd.ac.za/media/alerts/>).

Source: <https://www.nicd.ac.za/south-african-measles-outbreak-update-2023-26-january/>

COVID-19: South Africa

As of 21 January 2023, South Africa has recorded a cumulative total of 4 054 206 laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19 since the start of the pandemic. There were 1 506 new cases reported in week 3 of 2023, an 18.1% decrease compared to the number of new cases reported in week 2 of 2023 (n=1 855).

Considering the current global situation, as well as ongoing circulation of the virus in South Africa, there is a need for continued surveillance to detect any new variants of concern in the country. The National Department of Health (NDoH) has recently updated the guidelines on booster vaccinations

to include an additional booster dose for persons 18 years and older. In light of this, persons between the ages of 18 and 49 will now be eligible to receive a total of four doses of the vaccine, and those who are 50 years and older will be eligible to receive a total of five doses. Measures are also being taken to improve vaccination uptake and strengthen surveillance and risk communication and community engagement (RCCE) activities in the country.

For more information and updated case numbers, please visit the COVID-19 portal on the NICD website at www.nicd.ac.za.

Sources: <https://www.nicd.ac.za/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/COVID-19-Weekly-Epidemiology-Brief-week-3-2023-.pdf>; NDoH National Vaccination Programme Circular 1 of 2023

ZOONOTIC AND VECTOR-BORNE DISEASES

Rabies

As of 23 January 2023, there have been no human rabies cases reported in South Africa for the present year. There were 13 laboratory-confirmed and six probable cases of human rabies reported in 2022, a small decrease compared to the 19 laboratory-confirmed and four probable cases reported in 2021 (Figure 1). A person who has clinical signs and symptoms of rabies, with a history of contact with a suspected/probable/laboratory-confirmed rabid animal, is considered to be a probable case.

Although rabies is endemic throughout South Africa, laboratory confirmation of human cases has come from six of the country's nine provinces in the past ten years, namely, Eastern Cape (n=34), KwaZulu-Natal (n=30), Limpopo (n=20), Free State (n=6), Mpumalanga (n=3), and North-West (n=1). Since the total number of cases recorded, including probable cases, is 131, the number of 94 laboratory-confirmed human cases for

the same time period (2013-2022) represents underreporting of the total burden.

From 2019 to 2022, the provinces with the highest burden of human rabies cases were Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo. These provinces have experienced ongoing localized outbreaks of canine and human rabies with an increase in frequency and expansion to new localities starting from 2021 onwards.

Through widespread dog vaccination, awareness campaigns, and early post-exposure prophylaxis following a bite or exposure to saliva from a suspected rabid animal, human rabies can be prevented. The main way that humans are exposed to rabies is through rabid dogs. You can get more details on rabies and how to prevent it at www.nicd.ac.za.