

Measles vaccine rollout ramped up amid outbreak

As South Africa faces a surge in measles cases -- government has launched a national measles vaccine drive for all children under 15.



Source: Supplied. Chief executive officer of Cipla, Paul Miller.

It is recommended that every child receive the measles jab, regardless of their vaccination history.

Measles is a highly contagious disease, caused by a virus transmitted through direct contact or airborne droplets. It weakens the immune system, causes a total-body skin rash, flu-like symptoms and makes the child more vulnerable to other infectious diseases.

In 2021, there were 9 million measles cases and 128,000 reported deaths globally.

Cipla Medpro South Africa, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Cipla Limited (India), recently registered a measles vaccine and is supporting the government to curb the spread through widespread immunisation.

“As part of our ethos of ‘Caring for Life’, Cipla strives to ensure equitable access to life-saving medication – as we did through the HIV/Aids pandemic – with a special focus on opening access to South African children. We want to ensure that our youth live a long and healthy life,” said Paul Miller, chief executive officer of Cipla South Africa.

Measles is a vaccine-preventable disease (VPD), meaning vaccination is critical to eliminate the disease.



SA measles outbreak of concern, NICD warns as case surge hits 80% worldwide

Katja Hamilton 13 Jan 2023



According to a study in the *South African Medical Journal* (SAMJ), the Covid-19 pandemic caused a massive disruption to standard childhood immunisation programmes.

The World Health Organisation also stated that “routine immunisation programmes were badly disrupted, and millions of kids missed out on life-saving vaccinations against deadly diseases like measles”.

The availability of the measles vaccine hinges on effective collaboration with the South African Health Products Regulatory Authority (Sahpra) and the National Department of Health.

Cipla signed an agreement with the world’s largest manufacturer of vaccines (by number of doses produced and sold globally), the Serum Institute of India (SII), which means it is able to supply vaccines to the South African market.

Vaccines manufactured by the SII are accredited by the World Health Organization (WHO) and are being used in around 170 countries in their national immunisation programmes, saving millions of lives worldwide.

“Public-private partnerships have the potential to address challenges, foster progress and go a long way towards ensuring the good health and wellbeing of our citizens,” Miller added.

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