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Your health in caring hands

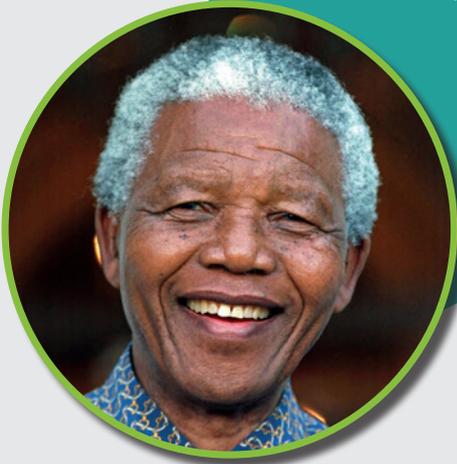
COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

What you need
to know

**BECAUSE....CARING
COMES NATURALLY TO US**

“Health cannot be a question of income; it is a fundamental human right.”

Nelson Mandela



It was our own President Nelson Mandela who said, *“Health cannot be a question of income; it is a fundamental human right.”* He also said, *“Education is the most powerful weapon with which you can change the world.”*

At Sizwe we agree that health care is every person’s right; we also believe that education and knowledge about health and wellness can change every person’s world for the better.

One in which you can make better health choices based on the knowledge you have, giving you the opportunity of a better life, and better quality of life. This booklet contains handy information about a group of diseases called communicable diseases. We trust that you will find the information useful, helping to keep yourself and your family in good health.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES



What are Communicable Diseases?

A communicable disease is a disease that can be spread to other people; in other words, it is contagious or infectious.



How are Communicable Diseases Spread?

They can be transmitted either from one person to another, or from a vector to a person, or from an animal to a person. Some of these diseases spread through the air, or when a person comes into contact with a contaminated surface or object.

We have placed each disease in a certain category. We realise that some of these diseases actually belong in other categories too, and for this reason you will find a handy chart that shows you how the various diseases are spread, whether by air, by person, by animal or insect, or through an infected surface or object.



What is a Vector?

A vector is a living organism that can transmit infectious diseases between humans or from animals, insects or parasites to humans, e.g. a mosquito.



What is a Zoonotic Disease?

This is another name for a disease that is spread from animals to humans. While a vector usually refers to either an insect or a parasite, 'zoonosis' is usually the term associated with a disease transmitted by an animal, e.g. Rabies.

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While featured in the Respiratory Diseases section on page 11, is also one of the diseases that children are vaccinated against.



GASTROINTESTINAL DISEASES

These are diseases in which the
stomach and intestines are affected.

CHOLERA

What is Cholera?

- An acute diarrhoeal infection
- May be fatal if not treated
- Caused by drinking/eating contaminated water/food

How is it spread?

It is spread through drinking contaminated water and eating contaminated food

What are the symptoms?

- Watery diarrhoea
- Vomiting
- Severe dehydration
- Leg cramps

What is the treatment?

- Oral rehydration solution
- Antibiotics may be prescribe

What can I do to prevent getting Cholera?

- Drink bottled, boiled or chemically treated water in areas where cholera is present
- Cholera can be present in areas where sewerage treatment is not effective, and where drinking water is not treated properly
- Wash hands often, with soap and clean water
- Clean hands before eating or preparing food
- Clean hands after using the bathroom
- Don't eat raw or undercooked meat or seafood, or unpeeled fruits and vegetables

E. COLI INFECTION (ESCHERICHIA COLI)

What is E. coli Infection?

- A bacterial infection

How is it spread?

- Through eating contaminated water or food, such as undercooked meat products and raw (unpasteurised) milk
- From person to person (e.g. when an infected person has not washed their hands after using the toilet, and then goes and prepares food for someone else)

What are the symptoms?

- Diarrhoea (watery or bloody)Fever
- Fatigue
- Severe abdominal cramps
- Nausea or vomiting

What is the treatment?

- Replace the fluids lost due to diarrhoea

What can I do to prevent getting E. coli Infection?

- Wash hands well and often
- Teach little children to do the same
- Wash fruits and vegetables before eating and cooking them
- Avoid unpasteurised milk and juices
- Avoid swimming in dams that may be contaminated with human waste

SHIGELLA INFECTION

What is Shigella Infection?

- A bacterial infection

How is it spread?

- Through direct contact with an infected stool
- When people don't wash their hands well enough after changing diapers
- By swimming in contaminated water
- Can be passed on in contaminated food and water

What are the symptoms?

- Diarrhoea (containing blood or mucous)
- Abdominal pain and cramps
- Fever

What is the treatment?

- Replace the fluids lost due to diarrhoea
- Antibiotics, in severe cases

What can I do to prevent getting Shigella Infection?

- Wash hands well and often
- Teach little children to do the same
- Dispose of soiled nappies properly
- Don't prepare food for others if you have diarrhoea
- Keep children with diarrhoea home, rather than sending them to school
- Avoid swimming in dams that may be infected
- Avoid sexual activity with someone who has diarrhoea

TYPHOID FEVER

What is Typhoid Fever?

- An acute bacterial infection

How is it spread?

- Through contaminated food and water
- Through close contact with someone who is infected

What are the symptoms?

- High fever
- Abdominal pain
- Muscle ache
- Loss of appetite
- Very swollen abdomen
- Headache
- Constipation or Diarrhoea
- Sweating
- Weight loss

What is the treatment?

- Antibiotics

What can I do to prevent getting Typhoid Fever?

- Wash hands regularly
- Clean food properly
- Prepare food properly
- Adequate sanitation



RESPIRATORY DISEASES

These are diseases in which the respiratory system, including lungs is affected.

FLU (INFLUENZA)

What is Flu?

- A highly contagious viral infection that attacks your lung, nose and throat

How is it spread?

- From person to person, when an infected person sneezes, coughs or talks
- In the air, when you inhale droplets that contain the flu virus
- Through direct contact when you share drinks or utensils
- When you handle items contaminated by an infected person (a phone, a computer keyboard) and then touch your mouth, eyes or nose

What are the symptoms?

- Weakness or severe fatigue
- Fever over 38 °C
- Chills and sweats
- Red, watery eyes
- Headache
- Dry cough
- Sore throat
- Congested nose
- Aching muscles; especially in your back, legs and arms
- Pain and a tired feeling around your eyes

What is the treatment?

- Bed rest and plenty of fluids
- In certain cases, antiviral medication may be prescribed

What can I do to prevent spreading or getting Flu?

- Get vaccinated with the season's flu vaccination
- Wash your hands often
- Cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze or cough
- Avoid contaminating your hands by coughing or sneezing into a tissue
- Avoid crowds – child care centres, schools, office buildings, elevators, public transport – during peak flu season
- Stay at home for at least 24 hours after your own fever normalises, if you're sick, to reduce the chance of spreading the illness to others

ENTEROVIRUS D68

What is Enterovirus D68 ?

- A viral infection that presents with flu-like symptoms

How is it spread?

- Through fluids such as saliva (spit), nasal fluids and phlegm
- When an infected person sneezes or coughs
- When someone touches something that the infected person has touched, and then touches their own eyes, nose or mouth
- Kissing, hugging or shaking hands with an infected person

What are the symptoms?

- Weakness or severe fatigue
- Fever over 38 °C
- Chills and sweats
- Red, watery eyes
- Headache
- Dry cough
- Sore throat
- Congested nose
- Aching muscles; especially in your back, legs and arms around
- Pain and a tired feeling your eyes

What is the treatment?

- Over-the-counter pain and fever products
- If severe, children may need to be hospitalised

What can I do to prevent getting Enterovirus D68?

- Wash hands well and often with soap
- Teach little children to do the same
- Do not share cups or eating utensils with someone who is sick
- Do not shake hands with, or kiss or hug sick people
- Cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze

WHOOPING COUGH (PERTUSSIS)*

What is Whooping Cough?

- A highly contagious respiratory tract infection caused by bacteria
- It's marked by a severe hacking cough, followed by a high-pitched intake of breath that sounds like a 'whoop'

How is it spread?

- Through air, when an infected person sneezes, coughs or talks
- It is present in fluids such as saliva (spit), nasal fluids and phlegm

What are the symptoms?

- Runny nose
- Nasal congestion (blocked nose)
- Red, watery eyes
- Fever
- Cough
- Vomiting caused by severe coughing attacks
- Extreme fatigue
- Turning red or blue due to severe coughing bouts
- It is important to note that some people don't develop the 'whoop' noise, but still have whooping cough
- Babies may struggle to breathe

What is the treatment?

- Babies and small children are generally hospitalised for whooping cough
- They are isolated from others to prevent the infection from spreading
- Antibiotics

What can I do to prevent spreading or getting Whooping Cough?

- Get vaccinated with the whooping cough vaccine
- This vaccine is usually given in a series of vaccinations, to babies

*Whooping Cough,

While featured in this Respiratory Diseases section, it is also one of the childhood communicable diseases that children should be vaccinated against.

TB (TUBERCULOSIS)

What is TB?

- A bacterial infection that usually attacks the lungs, but can also damage other parts of the body
- There are two types: Latent TB and Active TB

How is it spread?

- Through air, when an infected person sneezes, coughs or talks
- It is present in fluids such as saliva (spit), nasal fluids and phlegm

What are the symptoms?

Latent TB: you have a TB infection but the bacteria are inactive and no symptoms are present

Active TB: a bad cough lasting 3 weeks or longer

- Weight loss
- Coughing up blood or mucous
- Fever
- Night sweats
- Loss of appetite
- Weakness or fatigue
- Chest pain, or pain when breathing or coughing

What is the treatment?

- Antibiotics for 6 to 9 months
- You **MUST** take your antibiotics to ensure that you become completely TB-free

What can I do to prevent spreading or getting TB?

- Ventilate the infected person's house properly
- Cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze
- Infected people should sleep alone
- Ensure that you take your course of prescribed medicine as indicated, and that you complete it, not only for your health, but for that of your family and friends

DRUG-RESISTANT TB (DR TB)

What is DR TB?

- One of the biggest reasons that TB remains a major killer is the increase in drug-resistant strains of the disease
- DR TB is spread in the same way that drug-susceptible TB is spread (i.e. TB that responds to prescribed medication)
- DR TB occurs when bacteria become resistant to the prescribed medication – i.e. the medication no longer kills the TB bacteria

How is it spread?

- In the same way as TB, i.e. through air, when an infected person sneezes, coughs or talks
- It is present in fluids such as saliva (spit), nasal fluids and phlegm

What is the cause of DR TB?

DR TB occurs when medicines used to treat TB are misused or mismanaged. Here are some examples:

- TB patients don't complete the full course of their TB treatment
- Health care providers prescribe the wrong treatment, or the right treatment but at the wrong dosage, or for the wrong length of time

DRUG-RESISTANT TB (DR TB)

What is the cause of DR TB?

- Correct medication is not available
- Drugs are of poor quality
- People may be infected with the DR TB strains if they spend time with a person known to have a DR TB strain themselves

What are the types of DR TB?

Multidrug-Resistant TB (MDR TB)

Caused by TB bacteria resistant to the two most potent TB drugs, i.e. isoniazid and rifampin. These are the standard treatments for people with TB

Extensively Drug-resistant TB (XDR TB)

A rare type of MDR TB that is not only resistant to the first-line TB treatments, i.e. isoniazid and rifampin, but also to at least one of the second-line injectable TB treatments as well, e.g. amikacin, kanamycin or capreomycin

Resistance means that doctors are left to treat these patients with medication that is far less effective

What is the treatment?

- Less effective medications are used to treat DR TB, in the hope that the TB strain might respond

What can I do to prevent spreading or getting DR TB?

- If you're on TB medication, take your medicine regularly, as prescribed
- Take all your prescribed medication; i.e. finish the course

AVIAN FLU

What is Avian Flu?

- A viral infection that rarely infects human, but when it does, it can be deadly

How is it spread?

- Through contact with a bird's droppings, or secretions from its nose, beak or eyes
- At open-air markets where birds are sold in crowded or unsanitary conditions
- Eating undercooked meat, poultry or eggs from infected birds

What are the symptoms?

- Cough
- Sore throat
- Headache
- Fever
- Muscle aches
- Shortness of breath

What is the treatment?

- Anti-viral medicines

What can I do to prevent spreading or getting Avian Flu?

- Wash your hands
- Avoid domesticated birds in rural areas where infection is thought to be present
- Avoid cross contamination when you're preparing food: wash cutting boards and all surfaces after you've worked with raw poultry
- Cook poultry thoroughly
- Steer clear of raw eggs, and eggshells contaminated with bird droppings
- Avoid undercooked eggs



SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES

These are diseases that are
transmitted through sexual contact.



SYPHILIS

What is Syphilis?

- A bacterial infection
- Spread by sexual contact

How is it spread?

- Person to person, through contact with an infected person's sore during sexual activity
- The bacteria enter your body via cuts or grazes in your skin, or via your mucous membranes
- Congenital Syphilis is a disease that occurs when a mother infected with syphilis passes the infection on to her baby during pregnancy

What are the symptoms?

- **Primary Syphilis:** a small sore or chancre (pronounced SHANG-kur) appears at the spot where the syphilis enters your body. This often goes by unnoticed as it's usually painless
- **Secondary Syphilis:** a few weeks after the original sore heals, a rash appears on your trunk and eventually covers your entire body – even your palms. There may be wart-like sores on your mouth or genital area
Additional symptoms are muscle aches, fever, sore throat and swollen lymph nodes
- **Latent Syphilis:** if the disease isn't treated, it moves into a hidden stage. Symptoms may or may not return, or the disease could move to the third stage:
- **Tertiary Syphilis:** without any treatment, syphilis could develop these late-stage complications: damage to the brain, nerves, eyes, heart, blood vessels, liver, bones and joints
This could happen years after the original untreated infection

What is the treatment?

- The antibiotic, penicillin, is the treatment of choice

What can I do to prevent spreading or getting Herpes?

- Abstain from sexual intercourse, or be monogamous (sleep with only one partner)
- Use a latex condom. Condoms can reduce your risk of contracting the disease, but only if the condom covers the syphilis sores, if any



HERPES

What are Herpes?

- Herpes is a common viral infection that can either be present around the mouth (known as fever blisters or cold sores) or around the genital or anal area

How is it spread?

- Through mouth-to-mouth contact, via the cold sores and saliva (e.g. while kissing)
- Through mouth-to-genital contact, during oral sex
- Through sexual contact, genitally and anally
- From infected mother to baby, during birth

What are the symptoms?

- Most people are completely asymptomatic (i.e. they have no symptoms)
- Others experience painful blister-like sores on the lips, genitals or anus
- Before the sores appear, some people feel a tingling, itching or burning sensation around the affected area
- After the initial infection, blisters or ulcers can appear from time to time
- In the case of genital herpes, infected people may experience tingling or shooting pain in the legs, hips and buttocks. This often serves as a warning that an ulcer or blister will form shortly

What is the treatment?

- Topical antiviral creams are an effective treatment option
- Oral antivirals may also help reduce the severity and frequency of outbreaks
- There is currently no cure

What can I do to prevent spreading or getting Herpes?

- If you have a cold sore or blister on your mouth, avoid oral contact with others
- Do not share objects such as drinking straws, which could contain your saliva
- Avoid oral sex if you have a cold sore or fever blister, as you could transmit herpes to your partner's genitals
- Abstain from sexual activity if you have a genital herpes outbreak

GENITAL WARTS

What are Genital Warts?

- It is a common sexually transmitted disease occurring in both men and women
- It is a viral infection caused by the human papillomavirus (HPV)
- This virus causes both other warts that appear elsewhere on your body, and the genital variety

How is it spread?

- It is spread via vaginal, anal or oral sex with an infected person

What are the symptoms?

Men with genital warts:

- *The warts appear on the tip or shaft of the penis, the scrotum or the anus*
- *They can also appear in the mouth or throat of a person who has had oral sexual contact with someone who is infected*

Women with genital warts:

- *The warts can grow on the vulva, vaginal wall, the area between the external genitals and the anus, the anal canal and the cervix*
- The warts present as small, flesh-coloured or grey swellings
- Several warts in a cluster take on a cauliflower appearance
- Itching or discomfort in the genital area
- Bleeding during sexual intercourse

What is the treatment?

- Topical creams are often prescribed
- Another alternative is a chemical treatment that burns off the warts
- Surgery may be suggested

What can I do to prevent spreading or getting Genital Warts?

- Use a condom every time you have sexual intercourse to reduce the chances of contracting genital warts
- A vaccination is now available that protects against most strains of HPV

HIV/AIDS

What is HIV/AIDS?

- AIDS stands for Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome. It is a chronic condition caused by the human immunodeficiency virus, (HIV). HIV attacks your immune system, and interferes with your body's ability to fight diseases and infections. A person can be HIV-positive for up to 10 years before the disease progresses to what is called AIDS

How is HIV/AIDS spread?

- It is spread through sexual activity
- It can also be spread by coming into contact with infected blood, e.g. - exposure to blood from 'needle sticks' and other sharp medical instruments in medical settings
- AIDS may also be spread from a mother to her child during pregnancy, childbirth or breastfeeding
- By sharing needles during drug use

What are the symptoms?

Primary infection (Acute HIV)

- Flu-like illness experienced about a month or two after the virus has entered the body
- Rash
- Swollen lymph glands around the neck area
- Fever
- Headache
- Muscle aches; joint pain
- Sore throat

The viral load (amount of virus in the bloodstream) is very high in this stage, even though symptoms may be very mild. For this reason, the infection spreads rapidly during this stage

Clinical latent infection (Chronic HIV)

During this phase the HIV is dormant ... there are no specific symptoms but the HIV remains in the body and in infected white blood cells

Early Symptomatic HIV Infection

Symptoms such as the following, appear:

- Fever
- Swollen lymph nodes
- Weight loss
- Shingles (herpes zoster)
- Fatigue
- Diarrhoea
- Oral yeast infection (thrush)

Progression to AIDS

- Soaking night sweats
- Chronic diarrhoea
- Skin rashes or bumps
- White spots or strange lesions on your tongue or in your mouth
- Recurring fever
- Persistent fatigue
- Weight loss

HIV/AIDS

What is the treatment?

- A variety of medicines can be used to control the virus
Each type of anti-HIV medicine blocks the virus in different ways

What can I do to prevent spreading or getting HIV/AIDS?

- Use a condom every time you have sexual intercourse
- Always offer your own personal history, and ask your partner for theirs
- Have a joint HIV test with your partner to put both of you at ease that you won't contract a disease like HIV/AIDS

GONORRHOEA

What is Gonorrhoea?

- It is a common sexually transmitted disease occurring in both men and women
- It is a bacterial infection

How is it spread?

- It is spread via vaginal, anal or oral sex with an infected person

What are the symptoms?

Men with gonorrhoea may have no symptoms or the following:

- *Burning sensation while urinating*
- *A white, green or yellow discharge from the penis*
- *Painful or swollen testicles*

Women may have no symptoms, or the following:

- *Painful or burning sensation while urinating*
- *Increased vaginal discharge*
- *Vaginal bleeding between menstrual periods*

Women or men with rectal infections may experience no symptoms, or the following:

- *Discharge*
- *Bleeding*
- *Painful bowel movements*
- *Anal itching*
- *Soreness*

What is the treatment?

- Antibiotics

What can I do to prevent spreading or getting Gonorrhoea?

- Be in a long-term, single-partner relationship
- Use latex condoms correctly during sexual intercourse



EMERGING INFECTIOUS DISEASES

An emerging infectious disease (EID) is a contagious disease that has increased in the past 20 years, or which threatens to increase in the near future. In 2016, Zika was declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern by the World Health Organisation (WHO).



ZIKA VIRUS DISEASE (ALSO CALLED ZIKA)

What is Zika?

- It is a mosquito-borne viral infection
- The mosquito that carries Zika is found worldwide

How is it spread?

- It is spread through the bite of an infected mosquito belonging to the Aedes species
- When a mosquito bites an infected person, the virus enters the mosquito
- When that mosquito bites another person, the virus enters that person's bloodstream
- Infection through sexual contact has been reported
- Infection through blood transfusion has also been reported

What are the symptoms?

Four out of five people infected with Zika have no symptoms. When they do occur they include:

- Mild fever
- Rash
- Joint or muscle pain
- Headache
- Red eyes (conjunctivitis)
- When a pregnant woman is infected with Zika, she may miscarry, or give birth to a baby with microcephaly which is a fatal brain condition
- Zika has been linked to other neurological conditions like Guillain-Barre Syndrome

What is the treatment?

- There is no specific antiviral treatment for Zika
- Treatment is symptomatic, meaning it is aimed at relieving symptoms of the disease with over-the-counter medication

What can I do to prevent getting Zika?

- Use a condom every time you have sexual intercourse with your partner, if you have travelled to an area where Zika is found
- All pregnant women are to avoid travelling to areas where Zika is prevalent
- Stay in well-screened housing if you visit these areas
- Wear protective clothing in mosquito-infested areas
- Use mosquito repellent
- Reduce mosquito habitat, e.g. any containers with stagnant water



VIRAL HAEMORRHAGIC FEVERS

These highly contagious diseases interfere with the blood's ability to clot. They can damage the walls of tiny blood vessels, resulting in internal bleeding.

EBOLA VIRUS DISEASE (EVD)

What is EVD?

- A serious viral disease that occurs in both humans and animals such as chimpanzees, gorillas and antelopes

How is it spread?

- It is transmitted to people from wild animals
- It spreads amongst humans through person-to-person transmission
- Through contact with infected surfaces (linen, clothing)
- Through contact with the deceased infected person's body

What are the symptoms?

- Sudden onset of fever
- Diarrhoea
- Vomiting
- Chest pain
- Rash
- Headache
- Abdominal pain
- Sore throat
- Cough
- Conjunctivitis
- A serious viral disease that occurs in both humans and animals such as chimpanzees, gorillas and antelopes

What is the treatment?

- Treatment is aimed at the symptoms, as there is no proven treatment for EVD

What can I do to prevent spreading or getting EVD?

- Reduce the risk of animal-to-human transmission: don't eat potentially infected monkeys, apes, bats
- Handle animals with gloves and protective clothing
- Wash hands regularly
- Reduce the risk of possible sexual transmission by practising safe sex for 12 months from symptom onset

CRIMEAN-CONGO HAEMORRHAGIC FEVER (CCHF)

What is CCHF?

- It is a haemorrhagic fever caused by infection with a tick-borne virus

How is it spread?

- Ticks are a vector of this virus
- Many animals are hosts (cattle, goats, sheep, hares)
- Transmission occurs through contact with an infected tick, or animal blood
- Also person-to-person via contact with infected blood or body fluids

What are the symptoms?

- Headache
- High fever
- Back pain
- Joint pain
- Stomach pain
- Vomiting
- Red eyes
- Flushed face
- Red throat
- Red spots on the palate
- Jaundice
- Mood changes
- Severe bruising
- Severe nose bleeds
- Uncontrolled bleeding at injection sites

What is the treatment?

- Treatment is supportive (the symptoms are alleviated and fluids, oxygen and blood may be administered)

What can I do to prevent spreading or getting CCHF?

- Use tick repellent on exposed skin and clothing if you're an agricultural worker
- Wear gloves or protective clothing to avoid infection and prevent occupational exposure

LASSA FEVER (LASSA HAEMORRHAGIC FEVER, OR LHF)

What is LHF?

- An acute viral haemorrhagic fever caused by the Lassa virus

How is it spread?

- It is spread from rodents to humans
- Humans are infected either when they eat the rodent (a delicacy in some parts of Africa) or when they are exposed to their urine and faeces
- From person to person, when an infected person sneezes, coughs or talks
- Through direct contact with food or household items contaminated with the rodent urine and faeces
- Through sexual intercourse with an infected person

What are the symptoms?

- Fever
- General weakness
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Muscle pain
- Chest pain
- Nausea
- Vomiting (bloody)
- Diarrhoea (bloody)
- Stomach ache
- Facial swelling
- Bleeding from the mouth, nose or vagina
- Low blood pressure
- Seizures
- Tremor
- Disorientation
- Coma

What is the treatment?

- Antiviral medication

What can I do to prevent spreading or getting LHF?

- Practise good community hygiene to discourage rodents from entering homes
- Wash your hands often
- Store your foods in rodent-proof containers
- Maintain clean households
- Keep cats in areas where LHF is found



VECTOR-BORNE DISEASES

These are diseases that are transmitted by living organisms to humans.

MALARIA

What is Malaria?

- It is a disease caused by a parasite, and transmitted by the bite of infected mosquitoes

How is it spread?

- It is spread through the bite of an infected female mosquito of the Anopheles species
- From a mother to her unborn child
- Through blood transfusions
- By sharing needles to inject drugs

What are the symptoms?

Malaria is a recurring disease (once you've been infected you can get repeated attacks) with the following symptoms:

- Moderate to severe shaking and chills
- Sweating
- Vomiting
- High fever
- Headaches
- Diarrhoea

What are the complications?

- Cerebral malaria is an even more serious form of malaria in which parasite-filled blood cells block small vessels to your brain, resulting in possible swelling of the brain, and brain damage. This may in turn cause a coma and death

What is the treatment?

- Treatment depends on which type of malaria parasite you have, the seriousness of your symptoms, your age, and whether or not you're pregnant at the time
- Anti-malarial medication is used to treat malaria

What can I do to prevent spreading or getting Malaria?

- Speak to your doctor about preventative medication if you're going to visit a malaria area
- Spray your home with insecticide to keep mosquitoes away
- Sleep under a mosquito net
- Cover your skin with long pants and long-sleeved shirts, from dusk till dawn
- Spray both your clothing and your skin with insecticides

RABIES

What is Rabies?

- Rabies is known as a vector-borne disease or a zoonotic (spread from animal to human) disease
- This is a deadly virus spread to people from the saliva of infected animals
- Rabies outbreaks occur from time to time in areas in South Africa

How is it spread?

- It is spread from infected animals to people through a bite or scratch
- Dogs are responsible for 99% of rabies transmission to humans
- Person-to-person transmission is technically possible (when an infected person bites another person) but this has never been confirmed
- This is completely preventable through vaccination of dogs, as well as pre-exposure immunisation to people in high-risk settings

What are the symptoms?

- Fever
- Pain or an unusual tingling, pricking or burning sensation at the site of the animal bite or scratch
- As the virus spreads through the central nervous system, progressive, fatal infection of the brain and spinal cord sets in

There are two forms of the disease:

Furious rabies symptoms:

- Signs of hyperactivity
- Excited behaviour
- Hydrophobia (fear of water)
- Aerophobia (fear of flying)
- This is followed by death due to cardiorespiratory arrest (the person's lungs and heart fail)

Paralytic rabies symptoms:

- The muscles gradually become paralysed, starting at the site of the bite or scratch
- A coma develops
- This is followed by death

What is the treatment?

- The wound needs to be cleaned with soap and water, or any detergent that can kill viruses, as soon as possible after contact with a suspected rabid animal. This could be life-saving
- A course of potent rabies vaccine
- Administration of rabies immunoglobulin

What can I do to prevent getting Rabies?

- Vaccinate all dogs against rabies
- Vaccinate people in high risk situations, before they may contract the disease (e.g. health care workers in known rabies areas, or those working in laboratories with the virus, or tourists travelling to high-risk areas)

YELLOW FEVER

What is Yellow Fever?

- Yellow fever is a viral infection spread by a particular type of mosquito

How is it spread?

- The Aedes mosquito spreads the virus
- Humans and monkeys are most commonly infected
- Mosquitoes transmit the virus back and forth between monkeys, humans or both
- When a mosquito bites a human or monkey infected with yellow fever, the virus enters the mosquito's bloodstream and circulates before settling in the salivary glands.
- This is passed on, bite after bite

What are the symptoms?

At first, there are no symptoms. Then there are two phases that follow:

Acute Phase:

- Fever
- Muscle aches in your back and knees
- Nausea
- Loss of appetite
- Red eyes, face or tongue
- Headache
- Light sensitivity
- Vomiting
- Dizziness
- This phase may disappear after a few days

Toxic Phase:

- Some people may enter a toxic phase
- Acute symptoms return and may include: the whites of your eyes (Jaundice)
- Abdominal pain
- Decreased urination
- Slow heart rate
- Brain dysfunction
- Seizures
- Yellowing of your skin and
- Vomiting (sometimes blood is vomited up)
- Bleeding from the nose, mouth and eyes
- Kidney and liver failure
- Delirium
- Coma

What is the treatment?

- Treatment consists of supportive care in hospital
- Providing fluids, oxygen, replacing blood loss, dialysis for kidney failure and treating any infections that develop
- There is currently no cure

What can I do to prevent spreading or getting Yellow Fever?

- Get vaccinated before entering an area where yellow fever is known to be present; one vaccination provides 10 years' protection
- Spray your home with insecticide to keep mosquitoes away
- Sleep under a mosquito net
- Cover your skin with long pants and long-sleeved shirts, from dusk till dawn
- Spray both your clothing and your skin with insecticide



TICK BITE FEVER (RICKETTSIA)

What is Tick Bite Fever?

- It is a bacterial infection transmitted by ticks

How is it spread?

- Through a bite from an infected tick, via its saliva
- If an infected tick is crushed on your skin, the bacteria may be able to enter through a small cut or scrape

What are the symptoms?

- The presence of a black mark where the bite occurred
- Lymph nodes near the bite site may be enlarged
- Fever
- Severe headache
- Rash consisting of small red marks on the skin, sometimes slightly raised above the surface.
- The rash, if present, spreads from the limbs to the trunk, and may be seen on the entire body including palms of the hands and soles of the feet

What is the treatment?

- While some people get better on their own without specific treatment, antibiotics may be prescribed to shorten the duration or reduce chances of any serious side-effects

What can I do to prevent spreading or getting Tick Bite Fever?

- Avoid being bitten by ticks
- Avoid rural areas where ticks are likely to occur
- Wear insect repellents and long trousers and sleeves

BILHARZIA (SCHISTOSOMIASIS)

What is Bilharzia?

- A disease caused by parasitic worms

How is it spread?

- You get infected when your skin comes in contact with freshwater contaminated with
- Schistosoma eggs carried by snails
- This occurs when you are wading, swimming or bathing in the contaminated water

What are the symptoms?

At first, there are no symptoms. Then there are two phases that follow:

- Rash or itchy skin
- Fever
- Chills
- Cough
- Muscle aches start within a month or two of infection

Children who develop bilharzia show signs of:

- Anaemia
- Poor nutrition
- Learning difficulties

What is the treatment?

- Medicines are available to treat Bilharzia

What can I do to prevent getting Bilharzia?

- Avoid swimming or wading in freshwater in areas where Bilharzia is known to be present
- Drink safe water (Bilharzia is not transmitted by swallowing contaminated water, but if that water touches your lips or mouth you could become infected)
- Boil water prior to bathing in it
- Dry yourself vigorously after accidental exposure to contaminated water



OTHER DISEASES



BACTERIAL MENINGITIS

What is Bacterial (Meningococcal) Meningitis?

- This is the bacterial form of meningitis (there are others, caused by viruses and parasites as well)
- It is a serious infection of the thin lining that surrounds the brain and the spinal cord (the meninges)

How is it spread?

- It is transmitted from person to person through coughing, sneezing or kissing
- If you're living in close contact with an infected person the disease could also spread
- The disease only infects humans. There is no threat to animals

What are the symptoms?

- Stiff neck
- Sudden high fever
- Sensitivity to light
- Confusion
- Severe headache that seems different to normal
- Vomiting
- Even if the disease is diagnosed early, and treated quickly, 5-10% of patients die within 24 to 48 hours of experiencing the symptoms
- Bacterial meningitis may result in brain damage, hearing loss or a learning disability
- Rash

What is the treatment?

- If you suspect someone has this disease, rush them to hospital. Early treatment could prevent serious complications
- Antibiotic treatment and corticosteroids
- What can I do to prevent getting Bacterial

What can I do to prevent getting Bacterial Meningitis?

- Vaccination is the best way of protecting yourself and your children from Bacterial Meningitis.
- The conjugate meningococcal vaccine can be used from 9 months of age

HEPATITIS A

What is Hepatitis A?

- This is a contagious liver disease that results from infection with the Hepatitis B virus
- Acute Hepatitis B virus infection is a short-term illness
- People with this infection may lead to chronic Hepatitis B virus infection, which is a long-term illness

How is it spread?

- It is spread when blood, semen or other infected body fluid enters the body of a person who is not infected
- Infection may occur during birth (spread from infected mom to baby)
- Sexual intercourse
- Shared needles during drug use
- Sharing razors and toothbrushes with an infected person
- Direct contact with infected blood or open sores
- Exposure to blood from needle sticks and other sharp medical instruments in medical settings

What are the symptoms?

- Fever
- Fatigue
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Abdominal pain
- Dark urine
- Clay-coloured stool
- Joint pain
- Jaundice (a yellowing of the skin or eyes)

What is the treatment?

- There is no special treatment
- For the short-term illness, bed rest, adequate nutrition and fluid intake is recommended
- Chronic Hepatitis B sufferers must be monitored regularly for signs of liver disease and evaluated for treatment

What can I do to prevent getting Hepatitis B?

- Get vaccinated against it

HEPATITIS B

What is Hepatitis B?

- This is a contagious liver disease that results from infection with the Hepatitis B virus

How is it spread?

- It is spread when a person somehow consumes the stool - even microscopic amounts - of an infected person
- Contact with objects, food or drinks contaminated by the infected person's stool
- Person-to-person contact with that infected matter
- Eating food or drinking water contaminated with the virus
- This includes undercooked food

What are the symptoms?

- Fever
- Fatigue
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Abdominal pain
- Dark urine
- Clay-coloured stool
- Joint pain
- Jaundice (a yellowing of the skin or eyes)

What is the treatment?

- There is no special treatment
- Most people will feel sick for a few months before they begin to feel better

What can I do to prevent getting Hepatitis B?

- Get vaccinated against it
- Wash hands frequently with soap and warm water after using the bathroom, changing a baby's nappy or preparing food

HEPATITIS C (HCV)

What is HCV?

- This is a contagious liver disease that results from infection with the Hepatitis C virus
- Acute Hepatitis C virus infection is a short-term illness
- People with this infection may lead to chronic Hepatitis C virus infection, which is a long-term illness, and may lead to serious liver problems including cirrhosis or liver cancer
- HCV is considered the most serious of the three infections resulting from infection with the Hepatitis viruses, as many people have no symptoms until liver damage sets in

How is it spread?

- It is spread when blood enters the body of a person who is not infected
- Infection may occur during birth (spread from infected mom to baby)
- Sexual intercourse
- Shared needles during drug use
- Sharing razors and toothbrushes with an infected person
- Direct contact with infected blood or open sores
- Exposure to blood from needle sticks and other sharp medical instruments in medical settings
- People used to get this disease from blood transfusions; however testing has practically eliminated this scenario

What are the symptoms?

Most people have no symptoms until liver damage shows up during routine tests. Others may experience the following:

- Fever
- Fatigue
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Abdominal pain
- Dark urine
- Clay-coloured stool
- Joint pain
- Jaundice (a yellowing of the skin or eyes)

What is the treatment?

- Antiviral medicine

What can I do to prevent getting HCV?

- There is no vaccine available for HCV
- Health care workers have to be extremely cautious not to get pricked by needles infected with HCV



COMMON CHILDHOOD COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

The diseases below may occur in childhood, but are vaccine preventable. Vaccination is vital in order to prevent the spread of disease within communities, and children need to be vaccinated in order to protect them from these diseases. Children should be vaccinated at birth, 10 weeks, 14 weeks, 9 months, 18 months, 6 years and 12 years of age. Your child should have all the vaccinations.

MEASLES

What is Measles?

- A highly contagious viral respiratory infection
- Most commonly occurs in children

How is it spread?

- It is spread through airborne droplets of moisture via an infected person's cough, spittle or sneeze
- Through touching items contaminated by these droplets (tissues, other objects)

What are the symptoms?

- Fever
- Runny nose
- Hacking cough
- Red eyes
- Tiny white spots appear inside the mouth
- Sore throat
- Mildly itchy rash appears 3 to 5 days after the start of symptoms
- Rash starts out as flat red areas that soon become raised
- Rash starts around the ears and on the face, spreads to the chest and back, then on to the arms, legs and feet
- Diarrhoea
- Child may develop a high temperature (40°C)

What is the treatment?

- Treatment is symptomatic (the fever and pain are treated, and any resulting bacterial infections such as ear infections are treated with antibiotics)

What can I do to prevent getting Measles?

- Get vaccinated against Measles
- Isolate anyone in your family who has measles, as best possible

Why is vaccinating my child against Measles vital?

Your child may develop the following conditions as a result of contracting measles:

- Ear infection
- Pneumonia (serious lung condition)
- Encephalitis (inflammation of the brain that may lead to death)

GERMAN MEASLES (RUBELLA)

What is German Measles?

- A viral infection less severe than Measles, although they do share some characteristics

How is it spread?

- Person to person
- Through contact with the saliva (spit) of an infected person who has sneezed or coughed
- From a pregnant woman to her unborn child via the bloodstream

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms are often so mild they're difficult to notice, especially in children. They may include:

- Mild fever (38.9°C or lower)
- Headache
- Stuffy or runny nose
- Red eyes
- Swollen lymph nodes at the base of the skull, at the back of the neck and behind the ears
- A fine pink rash that starts on the face, spreads to the trunk and then to the arms and legs (the rash disappears in the same sequence)
- Aching joints, particularly in young women

What is the treatment?

- Symptoms are so mild, no treatment is generally necessary

What can I do to prevent getting German Measles?

- Get vaccinated against German Measles

Why is vaccinating my child against German Measles vital?

German Measles is a mild infection. However, if you're pregnant when you contract this disease, the consequences for your unborn child may be severe. Problems include:

- Growth retardation
- Deafness
- Cataracts
- Congenital heart defects
- Mental retardation
- Defects in other organs



MUMPS

What is Mumps?

- A viral infection affecting the salivary glands (situated below and in front of your ears)

How is it spread?

- Through contact with the saliva (spit) of an infected person who has sneezed or coughed
- Through sharing utensils with someone who has mumps

What are the symptoms?

- Swollen, painful salivary glands on one or both sides of the face
- Fever
- Headache
- Muscle aches
- Weakness
- Fatigue
- Loss of appetite
- Pain while swallowing or chewing

What is the treatment?

- Treatment is symptomatic (the symptoms are treated), but people usually recover in about two weeks

What can I do to prevent getting Mumps?

- Get vaccinated against Mumps

Why is vaccinating my child against Mumps vital?

Mumps complications involve a swelling and inflammation in another part of the body, e.g.:

- Testicles: may lead to sterility
- Ovaries and breasts: inflammation may occur here
- Brain: inflammation of the brain (encephalitis) may be fatal
- Membranes around the brain and spinal cord may become swollen, resulting in meningitis
- Hearing loss may occur

ROTAVIRUS

What is German Rotavirus?

- A viral infection that causes diarrhoea

How is it spread?

- Through contact with infected stool (e.g. if a child minder changes an infected baby's nappy)
- Spread by hands, on changing tables or doorknobs ... anything that has come in contact with the infected stool

What are the symptoms?

- Fever
- Vomiting
- Watery diarrhoea for 3 to 7 days
- Abdominal pain

What is the treatment?

- Plenty of fluids need to be given, to avoid dehydration
- An oral rehydration fluid may be prescribed to replace lost minerals
- Anti-diarrhoeal medications are not recommended for a Rotavirus infection

What can I do to prevent getting Rotavirus?

- Wash your hands frequently, especially after you change your child's nappy or if you use the toilet
- Get vaccinated against Rotavirus

Why is vaccinating my child against Rotavirus vital?

- Dehydration is a serious complication of Rotavirus, and is a major cause of childhood deaths in Africa

PNEUMOCOCCAL DISEASE (PNEUMOCOCCUS)

What is Pneumococcal Disease?

- A bacterial infection caused by the Streptococcus pneumoniae bacterium
- May cause a range of illnesses, including pneumonia, ear infections, blood stream infections (bacteraemia) and meningitis
- May be serious in children younger than 2 years of age, as well as in people with compromised immune systems, those with chronic illnesses and smokers

How is it spread?

- Person to person, through direct contact with respiratory secretions such as saliva or mucus (through coughing and sneezing)

What are the symptoms?

- As mentioned above, Pneumococcal Disease causes various illnesses. Here, the most common disease symptoms are listed:
- **Pneumococcal meningitis:** Stiff neck; Headache; Fever; Increased sensitivity to light; Nausea; Vomiting; Confusion; Babies have symptoms that include poor eating or drinking, low alertness and vomiting
- **Bacteraemia:** Fever; Chills; Confusion; Fatigue; Nausea; Diarrhoea; Pain in the belly; Anxiety; Shortness of breath
- **Middle Ear Infections (otitis media):** Ear pain; Red, swollen ear drum; Fever; Drowsiness

What is the treatment?

- Broad-spectrum antibiotics are typically used

What can I do to prevent getting Pneumococcal Disease?

- Get vaccinated against Pneumococcal Disease

CHICKENPOX (VARICELLA)

What is Chickenpox?

- A very contagious viral infection caused by the varicella-zoster virus (VZV)
- May be serious in babies as well as in others with compromised immune systems, as well as in pregnant women

How is it spread?

- Person to person, through touching the chickenpox blisters or breathing in the virus particles
- Possibly through with the saliva (spit) of an infected person who has sneezed or coughed

What are the symptoms?

- Fever
- Loss of appetite
- Headache
- Tiredness and a general feeling of being unwell
- A rash that starts out as raised pink or red bumps which turn into small fluid-filled blisters which are very itchy
- The blisters break and leak, after which crusts and scabs cover the broken blisters
- The rash may first appear on the face, chest and back, after which it spreads to the rest of the body, including inside the mouth, eyelids or genitals

What is the treatment?

- Treatment is not needed, but your doctor may prescribe an antihistamine to relieve itching

What can I do to prevent getting Chickenpox?

- Get vaccinated against Chickenpox

Why is vaccinating my child against Chickenpox vital?

Chickenpox is usually a mild disease. However it may lead to complications which include:

- Bacterial infections of the skin, soft tissues, bones, joints, bloodstream(sepsis)
- Dehydration
- Pneumonia
- Encephalitis (inflammation of the brain)
- Toxic shock syndrome
- Reye's Syndrome (in people using aspirin at the time of infection)

Chickenpox during pregnancy may lead to birth defects and is a serious life-threatening condition in new-born babies

DIPHTHERIA

What is Diphtheria?

- A serious bacterial infection that affects the mucous membranes of your throat and nose.
- Diphtheria may be deadly

How is it spread?

- Person to person, through direct contact with respiratory secretions such as saliva or mucus (through coughing and sneezing)
- Through contaminated personal items (an unwashed glass, used tissue)
- Through contaminated household items (this is rare, however)
- Direct contact with an infected wound

What are the symptoms?

- A thick grey membrane covers your throat and tonsils
- Sore, hoarse throat
- Swollen glands (lymph nodes) in your neck
- Difficulty breathing
- Rapid breathing
- Nasal discharge
- Feeling poorly

Cutaneous (Skin) Diphtheria

A second type of Diphtheria affecting the skin

- Pain
- Redness
- Swelling associated with other bacterial skin infections
- Ulcers covered by a grey membrane may also develop

What is the treatment?

- A Diphtheria antitoxin is administered
- Antibiotics

What can I do to prevent getting Diphtheria?

- Get vaccinated against Diphtheria

POLIO (POLIO MYELITIS)

What is Polio?

- A viral illness that may result in paralysis, difficulty breathing and possibly death

How is it spread?

- Person to person, through direct contact with an infected person
- Infected people can spread the virus for weeks in their faeces
- Can be transmitted through contaminated water and food
- Spread through the faecal-oral route, especially in areas with inadequate sanitation

What are the symptoms?

While Polio may cause paralysis and even death, most people infected with the poliovirus don't become sick and aren't even aware that they've been infected with it. However, it's worth taking note of the following:

Nonparalytic Polio:

As the name implies, this disease does not paralyse you. Symptoms may last for 10 days and include: Fever; Sore throat; Vomiting; Headache; Fatigue; Back and neck pain or stiffness; Pain or stiffness in the arms or legs; Muscle weakness or tenderness; Meningitis

Paralytic Polio:

Symptoms are the same as for Nonparalytic Polio at first, followed by: Loss of reflexes; Severe muscle aches or weakness; Loose, floppy limbs (one side is often worse than the other)

Post-polio Syndrome:

This cluster of symptoms may affect people as much as 35 years after they've had polio. Symptoms include: Progressive muscle weakness and pain; General fatigue and exhaustion; even after little activity; Muscle atrophy (degeneration); Breathing/swallowing problems; Less tolerance of cold weather; Concentration/memory difficulties; Depression/mood swings

What is the treatment?

- There is no cure, so supportive treatments include bed rest, pain relievers, ventilators to assist breathing, moderate exercise and a nutritious diet

What can I do to prevent getting Polio?

- Get vaccinated against Polio

TETANUS (LOCKJAW)

What is Tetanus?

- A serious bacterial illness that affects the nervous system, resulting in painful muscle contractions, especially in your jaw and neck muscles
- It can interfere with your ability to breathe, and may be life-threatening

How is it spread?

- Tetanus is contracted when the tetanus bacteria enters your body through a wound
- The bacteria that cause tetanus are found in soil, dust and animal faeces
- Tetanus cannot be caught from an infected person
- Tetanus cases have been known to develop from the following:

What types of wounds has Tetanus been known to develop from?

- Puncture wounds (body piercings, tattoos, splinters)
- Gunshot wounds
- Burns
- Animal or insect bites
- Infected foot ulcers
- Dental infections
- Compound fractures

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms appear anytime from a few days to several weeks after you've been infected with the bacteria. Symptoms commonly include:

- Spasms and stiffness in your jaw muscles
- Stiffness in your neck muscles
- Difficulty swallowing
- Stiffness of your abdominal muscles Painful body spasms lasting for several minutes, and triggered by minor events such as a draft, loud noise, physical touch or light
- Fever
- Sweating
- Raised blood pressure
- Rapid heart rate

What is the treatment?

- There is no cure, and treatment consists of wound care, as well as medications to ease symptoms
- An antitoxin may be given
- Antibiotics may be administered
- The Tetanus vaccine is given to people who have contracted Tetanus

What can I do to prevent getting Tetanus?

- Get vaccinated against Tetanus

HIB (HAEMOPHILUS INFLUENZAE TYPE B)

What is Hib?

- A serious bacterial infection that occurs mostly in babies and children younger than the age of 5
- It can cause lifelong disability and is deadly
- Contrary to its name, Haemophilus influenzae does not cause the ‘flu
- Hib can cause bacteraemia (blood infection), meningitis (brain and spinal cord infection), pneumonia (lung infection) epiglottitis (windpipe inflammation) cellulitis (skin infection) and infectious arthritis
- The most common disease caused by Hib is meningitis

How is it spread?

- Person to person, through direct contact with respiratory secretions such as saliva or mucus (through coughing and sneezing)

What are the symptoms?

As mentioned above, Hib causes various illnesses. Here, the most common disease symptoms are listed:

Nonparalytic Polio:

Stiff neck; Headache; Fever; Nausea; Vomiting; Increased sensitivity to light; Confusion; Babies have symptoms that include poor eating or drinking, low alertness and vomiting; their reflexes may be abnormal

Bacteraemia:

Fever; Chills; Confusion; Fatigue; Nausea; Diarrhoea; Pain in the belly; Anxiety; Shortness of breath

Pneumonia:

Fever; Cough; Shortness of breath; Chills; Sweating; Chest pain that comes and goes with breathing; Muscle pain; Headache; Fatigue

What is the treatment?

- Antibiotics

What can I do to prevent getting Hib?

- Get vaccinated against Hib

WHOOPING COUGH

While featured in the Respiratory Diseases section on page 11, whooping cough is also one of the diseases that children are vaccinated against



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