

Ministerial Statement by Minister of Health & Social Services

Dr. Bernard Haufiku , on the outbreak of Listeriosis in SA and a case reported in Namibia .

13 March 2018

Hon. Members

I have some bad news for you .

On the **8th of March 2018** , the South African Centre for Enteric Diseases , a division of the South African National Institute of Communicable Disease under that country's Department of Health , released its latest statistics on the outbreak of **Listeriosis** , the clinical condition that results from human infection with the bacterium *Listeria Monocytogenes*.

A total of **948** cases of Listeriosis have been confirmed through laboratory diagnosis since the first case was identified in **January 2017**. **180 patients** died of Listeriosis since the outbreak in SA.

Majority of them , **62% in Gauteng ? Gauging Province** , followed by The **Western Cape with 13%** of all cases .

37% of confirmed cases were neonates (meaning less than 28 days of life) , followed by patients in the age category of 15 to 49 years old .

Neonates , Pregnant women and immunocompromised patients have been identified as high risk persons .

Action taken thus far , apart from continues identifications and treatment of new cases , include :

1. Ordering of full recall food , mostly meat products from identified source in Polokwane called Rainbow Meat. Most implicated types of meat and meat products being : Polonies, Viennas .
2. Compliance notice issued to Rainbow Chicken by the South African Department of Agriculture and suspension of export of all meat products by Rainbow Chicken Enterprise Food in SA.
3. Dr. Aaron Motsoeledi confirmed this with yesterday when we spoke telephonically.

Here at home , we have been monitoring the situation in SA very closely since the outbreak in 2017. We have activated our surveillance and monitoring mechanism.

Now , the bad news

Viennas

A male patient age 41 years , was diagnosed with Listeriosis at the Catholic Private Hospital on 12 March 2018. the patient is reported to have eaten vines he bought in Tsumeb where he lives . The patient is currently receiving treatment at the Catholic Hospital in Windhoek and is reported to be in a stable condition.

This is the first case of Listeriosis reported in Namibia since the outbreaking in neighbouring SA.

In view of this latest development , the Mohss wish to repeat its warning and alert the public to refrain from eating any meat product that may still be available in Namibia despite the banning order . Mainly ; Sausages , Viennas , Russians and Frankfurters . Please do not consume any of these products from SA .

Furthermore I wish to inform the public that our surveillance and monitoring systems are in full force 24/7 and we are confident that we are able , despite many challenges , to prevent and contain Listeriosis in Namibia. We will do all we can , with resources at our disposal and reliance on our development partners but also on Namibians especially the Private sector , to ensure that no life will be lost due to Listeriosis .

We have already lost 7 lives to Hep E outbreak thus far and 7 are way too many — many

We also advise the public and especially the town of Tsumeb but also all other towns , Villages and human settlements in Namibia , to be on alert and report at the nearest health facility if the feel or notice the following symptoms .

1. **Fever**
2. **Diarrhea and Vomiting**
3. **Muscle Aches**
4. **Head Ache**
5. **Confusion**

6. Convulsive Seizures and others .

Lastly , Hon. Members , as we all know this years Independence Celebration is scheduled to take place in Tsumeb , we want to assure everyone that the Ministry of Health and other stakeholder ministries such as Agriculture and Finace are already hard at work to ensure that no program get disrupted by Listeriosis or any other disease outbreaks in Namibia

We have already informed all our Environmental Health practitioners to inspect all retailers that are selling these products and make sure that the products are removed from the shelves and destroyed under strict supervision, in line with our environmental policies and regulations .

I thank you.