

COLLINS CHABANE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY STATEMENT FOLLOWING THE MEDIA STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER OF HEALTH DR AARON MOTSOALEDI REGARDING THE UPDATE ON THE LISTERIOSIS OUTBREAK IN SOUTH AFRICA.

Collins Chabane Local Municipality is appealing to all residents of Collins Chabane to take the necessary precautions to curb the spread of Listeriosis following the news that 180 people have died from the food-borne disease since last January and over 940 cases reported so far.

It is alleged the source of the outbreak is likely to be a food product consumed by people across all socio-economic groups and the officials have announced that the outbreak was tied to a sausage-type meat that is made by South Africa's largest consumer foods group

The alert of a possible outbreak was noted in July when Gauteng doctors from neonatal units in the Chris Hani Baragwanath and Steve Biko Academic hospitals raised the alarm when they recorded an unusually high number of babies with Listeriosis

Addressing the media in Johannesburg, Health Minister Dr Aaron Motsoaledi mentioned that the conclusion from the ongoing investigation shows that the source of the present outbreak can be confirmed to be the enterprise food-production facility in Polokwane.

"We can now conclude scientifically that the source of the present outbreak is the Enterprise Food production facility located in Polokwane and we believe that "Polony" would be recalled from stores and advised South Africans "to avoid all processed meat products that are sold as ready-to-eat and we must advise that the recall of these products does not mean that members of the public must now relax and stop the 5 food-safety rules which we have recited many times have to be abandoned, at all times you must wash your hands before handling food or when coming back from the bathroom; making sure that food is well cooked; isolating raw food from cooked food; making sure that food is at an appropriate temperature; and washing non-cooked

food with clean running water; as well as using only pasteurised or boiled milk products.

,” he said.

Dr Motsoaledi also stated that “as of 02 March 2018, a total of laboratory-confirmed cases have risen to 948, still counting from January 2017. Of these 948, a total 659 patients have been traced and 180 of them have unfortunately died. This constitutes 27% case fatality rate.

In our constant search for the source of the outbreak and the treatment of people who are affected, a team from the NICD has interviewed 109 ill people to obtain details about foods they had eaten in the month before falling ill. Ninety three (85%) people reported eating ready-to-eat (RTE) processed meat products, of which polony was the most common followed by viennas/sausages and then other ‘cold meats,’.

On Friday 12th January, nine children under the age of 5 years presented to Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital with febrile gastro-enteritis. The paediatrician suspected foodborne disease, including Listeriosis, as a possible cause. The environmental health practitioners (EHPs) were informed and on the same day visited the crèche, and obtained samples from two unrelated polony brands(manufactured by Enterprise and Rainbow Chicken Limited (RCL) respectively) and submitted these to the laboratory for testing.

NB: Causes and Symptoms of Listeriosis infection

Listeriosis is an infection which is most frequently caused by the bacteria listeria which is found in water, soil, vegetation and animal feces. The bacteria can contaminate food — particularly dairy products, fresh meat and seafood but can be prevented by washing food and basic hygiene. The most common foods to be contaminated are raw or unpasteurized milk as well as soft cheeses, or vegetables, processed foods and ready-to-eat meats and smoked fish products. Listeriosis results in flu-like symptoms as well as nausea, diarrhea, and infection of the bloodstream. In severe cases, it can lead to an infection of the brain. Children, pregnant women, the elderly and people with compromised immune systems are at a heightened risk.

