



**DIRECTOR GENERAL  
HEALTH  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

PRETORIA  
Private Bag X828, PRETORIA, 0001. 27th Floor, Room 2710, Civitas Building, Cnr Thabo Sehume & Struben Street, PRETORIA, 0001 Tel: 012 395 8000, Fax: 012 395 8422  
CAPE TOWN  
P.O. Box 3875, CAPE TOWN, 8000, 6th Floor, Room 617, 103 Parliament Towers, Plain Street, CAPE TOWN, 8000 Tel: 021 461 2040, Fax: 021 461 6864

**PORT HEALTH OFFICIALS  
COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CONTROL COORDINATORS  
AIRLINE COMPANIES**

**ALERT: PLAGUE OUTBREAK IN MADAGASCAR, SCREENING MEASURES IN POINTS  
OF ENTRY AND PREPAREDNESS IN SOUTH AFRICA**

According to the World Health Organization, outbreak of Plague has been ongoing in Madagascar since 23 August 2017. As of 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2017, a total of 194 cases, which include suspected, probable and confirmed, of pneumonic plague have been reported with 30 deaths. The 194 cases have been reported from 20 districts in 10 regions. Of these, 124 cases and 21 deaths (case fatality rate 16.9%) had the pneumonic form of the disease.

A case of plague has been reported in a South African traveler in Madagascar where he is currently receiving treatment. To date, no case of plague has been reported in South Africa and the risk remains very low.

The key concern however, remains the frequent travel between South Africa and Madagascar. It is for this reason that points of entry, airline companies and all provinces are requested to be on the alert and enhance preparedness in order to prevent the importation of plague and implement response measures in the event that a case is detected in the country:

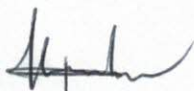
- Airline companies and crew members must remain vigilant for any travelers with symptoms related to Plague.
- Should a traveler present any symptoms related to Plague, airline companies or crew members must take the necessary precautionary measures and immediately report this to the Port Health office in line with requirements of the International Health Regulations (2005).
- Port health officials must enhance their screening measures (verification of health documentation, interview of crew, scanning for fever etc.) prioritise all direct and connecting flights arriving from the affected country.
- Where a suspected case has been identified or Port Health has been alerted of such, standard operating procedures for the management of a suspected case of communicable disease must be implemented.

- Provincial outbreak response teams must be on the alert and when required, conduct the necessary follow up of contacts.

Plague is an infectious disease caused by the bacteria *Yersinia pestis*, a zoonotic bacteria, Symptoms of plague usually develop after an incubation period of one to seven days and include the sudden onset of fever, chills, head and body aches, painful and inflamed lymph nodes, or shortness of breath with coughing and/or blood-tainted sputum. Non symptomatic travelers arriving from Madagascar must be advised to contact a medical practitioner should they experience any symptoms and inform him/her of their travel history.

All enquiries must be directed to Ms Aneliswa Cele on 012 395 8522/  
[aneliswa.cele@health.gov.za](mailto:aneliswa.cele@health.gov.za) or Ms Tsakani Furumele on 012 395 8096/  
[tsakani.furumele@health.gov.za](mailto:tsakani.furumele@health.gov.za).

For further information, please refer to the attached National Plague Control Guidelines, World Health Organization Situation Report on Plague in Madagascar and fact sheet.



**MS MP MATSOSO**  
**DIRECTOR-GENERAL: HEALTH**

DATE: 05/10/2017