



health

Department:
Health
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MEDIA STATEMENT

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Health Department welcomes Christmas bundles of joy

Pretoria: The Department of Health joins parents and families in welcoming over 500 bundles of joy born as of midday on Christmas day and reminds mothers to prioritise exclusive breastfeeding for at least the first six months to two years of the babies' life to enable them to achieve optimal growth and development, and also enjoy a long, safe and healthy journey of life.

The first bundle of joy was a healthy baby girl welcomed at 00h00 at Galeshewe Day Hospital in the Northern Cape, followed by a baby boy delivered at 00h02 at Harry Gwala Regional Hospital in KwaZulu-Natal, then at Cecilia Makiwane Hospital at 00h03 and West End Community Health Centre at 00h04, both in the Eastern Cape. Almost 40% of this number of babies were born in Gauteng health facilities, followed by KwaZulu-Natal facilities.

The department also urges all mothers and caregivers to ensure their newborns remain up to date with immunizations as per the Road-to-Health Booklet, also known as the clinic card, to protect them against life-threatening childhood diseases such as polio, measles and smallpox.

It is also important for parents to ensure that babies are registered for birth certificates within 30 days after birth to avoid late registrations. To make it more convenient for parents to register their children within 30 days, the Department of Home Affairs has set up 161 offices at public hospitals and selected clinics as part of government's efforts to promote early birth registration.

The department in partnership with various stakeholder in the health sector has launched the Side-by-Side campaign and the MomConnect initiative to support mothers to ensure that all children under the age of five years receive the nurturing care they need to survive and thrive.

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