

## **TALKING POINTS ABOUT YELLOW FEVER**

### **1.What is Yellow Fever?**

Yellow fever is a viral infection that is spread to humans through a bite from a mosquito carrying the Yellow Fever virus. It causes fever, yellowing of the eyes and bleeding from any body openings such as mouth, nose, eyes, ears etc. The “yellow” in the name refers to the jaundice (Nkaka) that affects some patients.

### **2. What are the signs and symptoms of Yellow Fever?**

**The first (acute)** phase usually causes fever, muscle pain with prominent backache, headache, shivers, loss of appetite, and nausea or vomiting.

Most patients improve and the symptoms disappear after 3 to 4 days.

Approximately 15% of patients enter **the second, (toxic) phase** within 24 hours of the initial remission.

- High fever returns and several body systems are affected.
- The patient rapidly develops jaundice, abdominal pain and vomiting.
- Bleeding may occur from the mouth, nose, eyes or stomach. Once this happens, blood appears in the vomit, urine and faeces.
- Kidney function deteriorates.
- **Half of the patients** who enter the toxic phase die within 10 to 14 days.

### **3. Why is the Ministry of Health vaccinating children and adults against yellow fever?**

There are confirmed cases of Yellow Fever outbreaks in the country and Uganda has low rates of vaccination against yellow fever. Besides, Uganda is an endemic country and is susceptible to yellow fever transmission. Therefore, immunising children at 9 months will protect them against Yellow Fever disease. Yellow fever vaccine is a single dose given once in a lifetime.

### **4. If yellow fever is a single dose in a life time, what happens to those people who were vaccinated before?**

Those people that have already been vaccinated will not receive another dose of yellow fever vaccine. The previous vaccination dose they received is sufficient for a lifetime.

## **5.How is Yellow Fever spread?**

The Yellow Fever virus is spread by mosquitoes. Mosquitoes carrying the Yellow Fever virus transmit it to humans through a bite

## **5. Who is at risk of getting Yellow Fever?**

Anyone who is bitten by a mosquito infected with Yellow Fever virus can get the disease. However, it is important to note that some members of the community may be more at risk of contracting the disease than others, for example:

- anyone who is not immunised against Yellow Fever
- people who work or live-in forests

## **6. How can Yellow Fever be prevented?**

**Yellow fever mass vaccination:** is the most effective preventive measure against Yellow Fever. The Ministry of Health with support of partners has planned to conduct yellow fever preventive mass vaccination campaign in five regions of Kampala, Mbarara, Masaka , Soroti and Karamoja to vaccinate all eligible children against yellow fever. It will target children aged 9 months and adults aged up to 60 years.

The Yellow Fever vaccine is safe, affordable, highly effective and is available in the health facilities. One dose of the Yellow Fever vaccine is enough to provide life-long protection against Yellow Fever. Thus, yellow vaccination is given once in a lifetime.

**Mosquito control:** reduce or eliminate potential mosquito breeding sites such as stagnant water and bushes around homes. In addition, sleep under insecticide-treated nets every night.

**Personal protection:** wear long sleeved shirts or blouses, trousers, use mosquito repellants and avoid long walks in forests or jungles.

**Community level action:** the risk of Yellow Fever transmission can be reduced by, eliminating potential mosquito breeding sites such as used containers around the homes

## **7. How is Yellow Fever treated?**

There is no specific treatment for Yellow Fever disease. Health workers can only offer supportive treatment to treat dehydration and fever. Bacterial infections linked to the diseases can be treated with antibiotics. It is important to seek early treatment when symptoms show

### **8. Where can one go for vaccination against yellow fever?**

Vaccination against yellow fever is being done in government health facilities. However, to boost the routine yellow fever vaccination, Ministry of Health will conduct yellow fever preventive mass vaccination campaign in five regions that are currently at high risk of contracting yellow fever disease. These include Kampala, Masaka, Mbarara, Soroti and Karamoja regions.

### **9. Will yellow fever vaccination be done at a cost especially in government health facilities?**

No. Yellow fever in government health facilities is free of charge, however, in private health facilities it is provided at a cost.

### **10. What happens when a person is not treated early?**

If a person is suffering from yellow fever and is not treated early, they progress to a life-threatening phase with the following signs and symptoms:

Yellowing of the eyes (jaundice) and skin.

- Stomachache
- Vomiting
- Reduced urination
- Slow heart rate
- Liver and kidney failure
- Seizures
- Diarrhoea

Health workers can offer supportive care to improve health such as treating dehydration due to fever and providing basic counseling, In case you fall ill, it is important to seek immediate supportive care at your nearest health facility to increase your chances of surviving the disease. **NOTE:** Persons with Yellow Fever disease should be taken to the health facility immediately to avoid these complications and death.

### **11. Should everyone in the community/country be vaccinated against Yellow Fever?**

During an outbreak, everyone from a community or country where a case has been confirmed in a laboratory should be vaccinated except for those with contraindications.

However, all the following categories of people should NOT be vaccinated during this preventive campaigns:

- Pregnant women
- Breastfeeding mothers
- Babies aged less than 9 months
- Anyone undergoing immunosuppressive/radiation therapy
- All those who have undergone organ transplant within two years
- Individuals aged above 60 years
- People who are allergic to eggs
- Ill patients suffering from AIDs (WHO stage 3 and 4, or CD4  $\leq$ 200)

## **12. Role of Community Leaders and Community Health Workers in prevention and control of yellow fever**

Every community leader or school administrator, teacher, or and LCs, community health worker such as Village Health Team members should actively educate communities on the signs & symptoms, mode of spread and prevention of Yellow Fever.

## **13.Role of schools in promoting and supporting the yellow fever disease immunization campaign**

As school administrators, you are expected to:

- Link up with health facilities to make sure your school is mapped for **yellow fever disease** immunization services
- Identify pupils/students to be immunized during the campaign and look out for those who missed out on immunization services so that they can be immunized
- Demand for **yellow fever disease** immunization services to be organized and conducted in your school from the nearby health facility
- Ask for IEC materials on **yellow fever disease** from the DHO's office and display them in schools to inform and educate your pupils and students about **yellow fever vaccination campaign**.
- Educate the students/pupils and parents/caregivers about the benefits of **yellow fever vaccination**.
- Inform pupils/students to remind their parents/caregivers to take their siblings aged 1 year to 60 years for **yellow fever vaccination**.

- Incorporate health related information especially on **yellow fever vaccination** into school activities e.g. school assembly, health talks, PTAs and quarterly review meetings
- Identify children with signs and symptoms of **yellow fever** disease e.g. fever, yellowing of eyes and refer them to the nearby health facility immediately

#### 14. Key messages

- Yellow fever is a serious disease that spreads by infected mosquitoes.
- The most effective way of preventing Yellow Fever is through vaccination and/or mosquito control.
- Yellow fever is not transmitted from person to person by contact.
- Remove potential mosquito breeding sites such as stagnant water and bushes around your home Sleep under an insecticide treated mosquito net every night to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes.
- Vaccination against yellow fever is done once in a lifetime.
- All School administrators have a responsibility to ensure that all children and staff are immunized against **yellow fever disease** during this campaign
- Immunized children are the foundation for social and economic development of the nation.
- Parents and caregivers with children aged 9 months should take them to health facilities and outreach vaccination posts for vaccination against yellow fever during routine immunization and the forthcoming yellow fever preventive mass vaccination campaign due to start in April 2024.
- All adults aged up to 60 years should go to health facilities and outreach vaccination posts for yellow fever vaccination during the yellow fever mass vaccination campaign.
- People who have been vaccinated against yellow fever before should NOT get for another dose of yellow fever vaccine. Remember, yellow fever vaccine is a single dose given once in a lifetime.
- The **yellow fever disease** vaccines are **SAFE, EFFECTIVE, FREE** and available at government and non-government facilities. The vaccines are approved by **Ministry of Health, UNICEF and WHO.**

Any reactions (AEFIs) that may follow yellow fever vaccination should be reported immediately to the health worker for appropriate management and investigation.

Report any side effects to the nearest health facility, DHO, National Drug Authority via a) Toll free line 0800 101 999 b) dial \*284\*99# c) WhatsApp 0740 002 070 d) <https://primaryreporting.who-umc.org/UG> Notify the health worker about any suspected yellow fever case at the nearest health facility. Early treatment prevents complications and death