

More than 150 children dead in Zimbabwe measles outbreak

August 17 2022

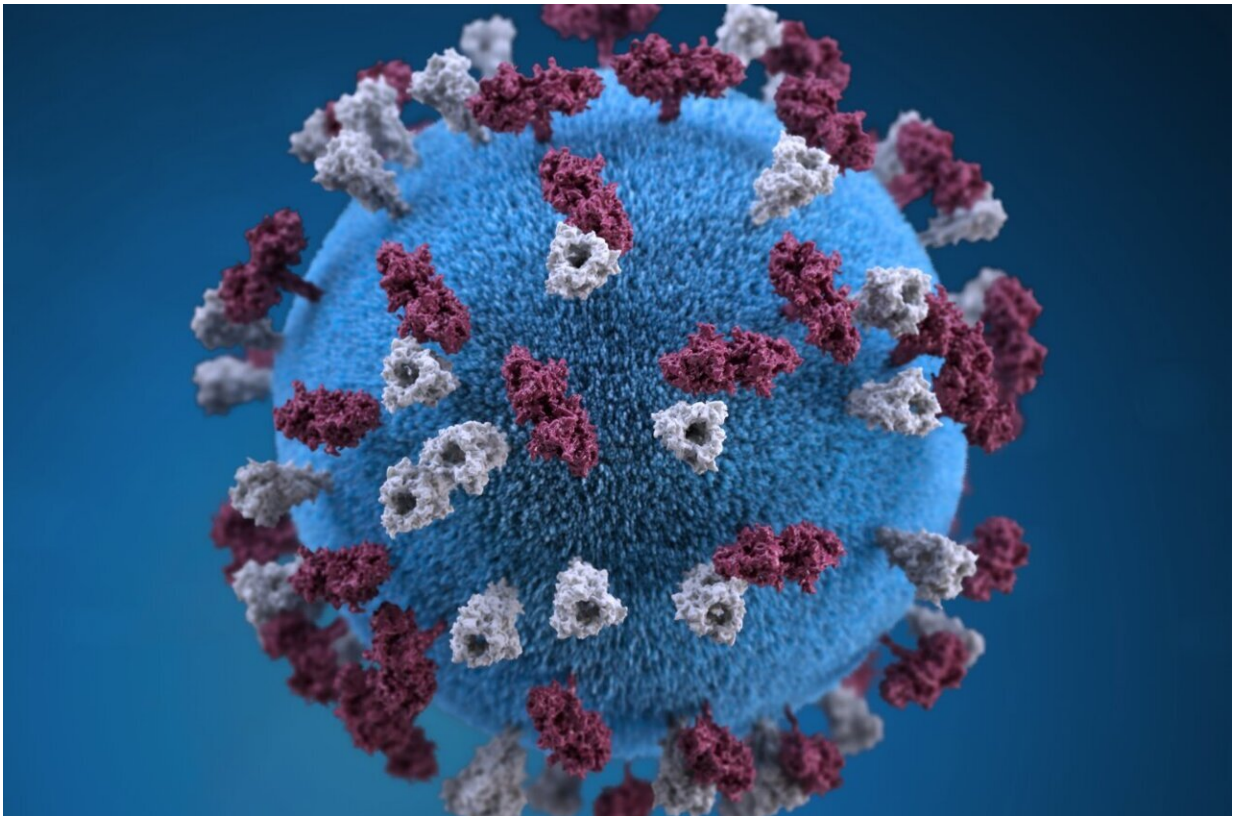


Illustration of the virus which causes measles. Credit: CDC/ Allison M. Maiuri, MPH, CHES

A measles outbreak in Zimbabwe has killed at least 157 children, with more than 2,000 infections reported across the country, the government

said on Tuesday.

Cases have been growing rapidly in the southern African nation since authorities said the first infection was logged earlier this month, with reported deaths almost doubling in less than a week.

"As of 15 August the cumulative figures across the country has risen to 2,056 cases and 157 deaths," Information Minister Monica Mutsvangwa said briefing journalists after a weekly cabinet meeting.

Mutsvangwa said the government was going to step up vaccinations, and has invoked special legislation allowing it to draw money from the national disaster fund "to deal with the emergency."

She said the government was to engage with traditional and faith leaders to garner their support with the vaccination campaign, adding all victims were not vaccinated.

The health ministry has previously blamed the outbreak on church sect gatherings.

The measles virus attacks mainly children with the most serious complications including blindness, [brain swelling](#), diarrhoea and severe respiratory infections.

Its symptoms are a red rash that appears first on the face and spreads to the rest of the body. Once very common it can now be prevented with a vaccine.

In April, the World Health Organization (WHO) said Africa was facing an explosion of preventable diseases due to delays in vaccinating children, with [measles cases](#) jumping 400 percent.

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