

Diphtheria outbreak kills 58 in Guinea

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An outbreak of diphtheria in northeastern Guinea has killed 58 people, many of them young children, the World Health Organization (WHO) said in a statement received Thursday.

The highly contagious respiratory disease can be fatal in five-10 percent of cases, and even higher among children.

WHO reported well over 500 suspected cases since July centered on the Siguiri prefecture. Symptoms usually start with a [sore throat](#) and fever.

Guinea's health services do not have the capacity to cope with the outbreak, WHO said, noting that vaccine coverage against diphtheria has been below 50 percent of the population since 2014.

A rate of 80-85 percent coverage is needed to maintain community protection against diphtheria.

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