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Media alert from the Media Scanning & Verification Cell, IDSP-NCDC.

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<b>Title:</b>	<b>Diphtheria cases prompt rethink on immunisation strategy</b>			
Action By CSU, IDSP -NCDC	Information communicated to SSU-Kerala			

## District Medical Officer convenes meeting to work out fresh plans to prevent recurrence of disease in Malappuram

The resurfacing of two diphtheria cases in the district has not only shocked health authorities but also made them believe that there is much more to be done in their immunisation drive. The District Medical Office here is up for a rethink on the strategy being followed in combating some preventable diseases, including diphtheria.

"We ought to adopt a different strategy in the light of our failure in reaching out to our target groups," said District Medical Officer K. Sakeena. She has convened a meeting of officials on Friday to discuss if fresh plans were needed to cover the un-immunised sections that have been resisting vaccination in the district.

Both the cases of diphtheria, being treated at Government Medical College Hospital, Kozhikode, were said to be the result of lack of immunisation. When one of them is an adult woman from Thuvvoor, the other is a three-and-a-half-year-old boy of a migrant family.

**Save Water- Save Life, Save a tree- Don't print unless it's really necessary!**

**Disclaimer:- This is a media alert subject to verification.**

**Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP), National Centre for Disease Control,  
Ministry Of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India**

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The confirmation of diphtheria in the Assamese boy has posed fresh worries to the authorities. "So far, we have not bothered about migrant people. Now this has become a real issue," Dr. Sakeena said.

The health authorities have failed to inflict any serious damage to the anti-immunisation bloc in the district in spite of their intensive campaigns, including the ongoing Mission Indradhanush. Although the Health Department could bring in an increased number of children under the immunisation cover, the resistance groups too have grown stronger.

Those groups resisting immunisation have been using the social media, particularly WhatsApp, to reach out regularly to their targeted audiences. People who have not immunised their children for various reasons are being bombarded with anti-immunisation propaganda on a daily basis. "We hardly get a chance to communicate with them individually to convince them," Dr. Sakeena said.

She said young fathers who are the decision-makers in many families would be focused in the next phase of the awareness campaign. "Educating women alone will not help. Men should also be aware of the importance of immunisation," she said.

The mother of a boy from Oorakam afflicted with tetanus confessed to the doctors at the medical college hospital the other day that she had not been aware of the gravity of the disease when she resisted immunisation. Apart from working out new strategies to take on the anti-immunisation groups, the health authorities will also devise plans to reach out to the entire population with vaccines.

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