

# MPOX: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Mpox is a preventable and treatable disease if diagnosed early. The Department of Health recently reported a few new cases of Mpox, formerly known as monkeypox. Although Mpox is a rare viral infection that is usually only accompanied by mild symptoms, it can pose serious health risks. Here's what you need to know.

## Where does Mpox come from?

Mpox is part of the Poxviridae family of viruses called Orthopoxvirus. Smallpox and cowpox form part of this family. The former name monkeypox originates from the first recorded cases of this disease in 1958 when two outbreaks occurred in monkeys kept for research. Monkeys, however, are not the main carriers of this virus.

Scientists suspect it is spread by small rodents and squirrels in the rainforests of Africa. There are two types (strains) of Mpox: Central African and West African. Central African Mpox leads to more severe infections and is more likely to cause death than West African Mpox.

## How is it transmitted?

Mpox is transmitted through contact with an infected person or animal or with infected surfaces. It enters the body through a sore or cut on the skin, inhalation, or the membranes in the eyes, nose, or mouth.

Anyone can get mpox. It spreads from contact with infected:

- persons, through touch, kissing, or sex
- animals, when hunting, skinning, or cooking them
- materials, such as contaminated sheets, clothes or needles
- pregnant persons, who may pass the virus on to their unborn baby.

## What is the treatment?

There is currently no proven treatment for Mpox, however antiviral medications used to treat smallpox and other conditions may help certain patients with Mpox. A healthcare provider will monitor the patient's condition and try to relieve the symptoms. Most people get better without treatment.

## If you have Mpox?

Some useful advice endorsed by the World Health Organisation is:

- Tell anyone you have been close to recently
- Stay at home until all scabs fall off and a new layer of skin forms
- Cover lesions and wear a well-fitting mask when around other people
- Avoid physical contact



## Be on the lookout for these symptoms

Once the virus enters the body, it rapidly begins to multiply and spread throughout the body via the bloodstream. Symptoms usually only appear one to two weeks after infection. Symptoms may include flu-like symptoms and range from:

- fever
- headaches
- muscle aches
- back pain
- shortness of breath
- fatigue
- chills, and
- swollen lymph nodes (glands).

One to ten days later, a rash may appear on the arms, legs, head, or torso that eventually turns into blisters with pus. The symptoms usually last for two to four weeks, while the rash will form scabs within 14 to 21 days.

## How to protect yourself?

Practice personal hygiene e.g. washing of hands regularly and respiratory etiquette, e.g., cover your cough and sneeze. If you do present with symptoms, visit a healthcare facility so that it can be treated.



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