

Mpox (formerly Monkey Pox) factsheet

“...a viral infection which spreads between people and occasionally from the environment to people, via objects and surfaces that have been touched by a person with Mpox.”

How does Mpox spread?

Person-to-person transmission involves close contact (skin-to-skin, mouth-to-skin) with an infected person or materials (bedding, clothing) that have been contaminated by an infected person.

What are the symptoms of Mpox?

Initial symptoms:

- fever
- headache
- muscle aches
- tiredness
- swollen lymph nodes

Within 1-3 days of onset of disease, a blister-like rash develops mainly on the face, hands and feet, but it may occur on other parts of the body and genitals.

How long is Mpox contagious?

An infected person is contagious from the onset of the rash/lesions through the scab stage. Once all scabs have fallen off, a person is no longer contagious.

How is Mpox treated?

Treatment is supportive, as with most viral infections. Most human cases of mpox virus infection do not require any specific treatment and the disease resolves on its own.

At present there is **no registered treatment for Mpox in South Africa.**

Is there a vaccine available in South Africa?

This is being actively investigated by the National Department of Health. Hopefully it will be available soon.

What is the risk of being infected in South Africa?

The overall **risk of being infected in South Africa is low.**

Key people at risk

- Men who have Sex with Men (MSM), especially those who have multiple sexual partners.
- Those who are immune compromised are at risk of more severe disease.

Mpox incubation period (time from infection to symptoms)

On average **7-14 days** but can range from 5-21 days.

What should you do if you think you have Mpox?

Avoid close contact with others until all lesions have healed, and scabs dried off.

This should include staying at home and self-isolating (unless you need medical assessment or care - also for other urgent health and wellbeing issues).

Isolation stops transmission to others.

Can you die from Mpox?

The new variant (clade 1b) has a relatively high mortality rate (three out of the 24 reported cases in South Africa). This is **around 10%**, which is approximately what the stats elsewhere are showing.

There are differences in mortality between the various clades (variants):

- Clade 1a (moderate mortality, mixed mode contact including children)
- Clade 1b (highest mortality, mostly sexual contact); and
- Clade 2 (lowest mortality, mostly sexual contact)

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