



BANKMED MPOX FAQs

What is mpox?

Mpox (previously named Monkeypox) is a well-known, typically rare viral disease that has been around for a long time. It is rarely fatal, and typically resolves spontaneously without any major medical intervention.

How does it spread?

The mpox virus is transmitted from one person to another by close contact with the skin and mucosal lesions, body fluids, respiratory droplets, and even contaminated materials such as bedding.



What are the symptoms?

The disease usually presents with an acute illness characterised by fever, headache, muscle aches, backache, chills and exhaustion and other general flu-like symptoms. Within one to three days of the onset of symptoms, blister-like lesions will develop on the face, the extremities including soles of the feet and palms of the hands, followed by a blister-like rash on the skin. These symptoms typically last from two to four weeks and resolve without side effects. The disease is rarely fatal (the case fatality rate in the most recent outbreak is 1%), and cases typically resolve without requiring treatment. Severe cases may occur in new-born babies, children, and people with immune system deficiencies, but these are rare.



How is mpox diagnosed?

Mpox is diagnosed by a healthcare worker based on the clinical presentation of the patient. The nature of the rash would be the most telling sign. However, the healthcare worker will consider exposure for the case, with the consideration that the likelihood of contracting mpox is very low. Many other diseases, such as chickenpox, may cause similar rashes and are more common.



How is mpox treated?

Most human cases of mpox virus infection do not require any specific treatment and the disease resolves on its own. In severe cases a clinician may consider using anti-viral drugs but this is done on a case-by-case basis.



When is an mpox infected person no longer 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. It is currently not known how long a viable virus may persist for example in semen.



How do I prevent mpox infection?

The risk of coming into contact with mpox is low. However, it's important to be cautious and aware. The best ways to prevent mpox infection include:

- Avoiding contact with people who are suspected or known to be infected with the virus
- Avoiding contact with bedding and other materials that may be contaminated by someone with the virus
- Practicing safe sex, including the use of condoms
- Washing your hands frequently with soap and water



Where else can I find out more about mpox?

The National Institute of Communicable Diseases (NICD) is monitoring the situation closely in South Africa, and conducting a full investigation of the reported cases, to assess the risk and advise on appropriate precautions for people in South Africa.

You can keep up to date on the latest available research and information on mpox on the NICD website, as well as access the WHO Disease Outbreak Page for updates on global data.

