



Questions and answers about mpox

What is mpox?

Mpox (formerly monkeypox) is an infectious disease that is caused by a virus. Since May 2022, there has been extensive human-to-human transmission of the disease and subsequently a markedly increased geographical spread. During 2022/2023, mpox infections in humans have been reported by at least 110 countries.

How is mpox spread?

During this outbreak, transmission of the virus among humans has mainly been through close skin contact in conjunction with sexual contact between men who have sex with men. It is likely the virus can also be spread via mucous membranes, semen and vaginal secretions, and the possibility of infection via the respiratory tract has also been discussed.

There have also been isolated cases of transmission via bedding and towels that a person with mpox has been in contact with.

What are the symptoms of mpox?

The most common symptoms are painful blisters or sores on the skin or on mucous membranes (face, trunk, arms, legs, hands, feet, in the mouth, around the genitals and around the anus) and general malaise. Swollen lymph nodes in the armpits, groin or on the neck are also common. There may be additional symptoms such as fever, headache, muscle pain, diarrhoea and difficulty urinating.

During the current outbreak of mpox, few people have become seriously ill. In rare cases, the virus can lead to complications and, in exceptional cases, may even cause death. This applies mainly for people with compromised immune systems.

How long is the incubation period?

The time from transmission of mpox until symptoms appear (the incubation period) is usually 6 to 13 days, although it can vary from 5 to 21 days.

Is there any treatment for mpox?

Most people do not need any treatment since the symptoms disappear of their own accord after two to four weeks. Pain relief may be required for painful blisters on the skin or mucous membranes. For people who are severely affected, there is also antiviral treatment that slows down or, in favourable cases, stops the virus.

When do I need to seek medical care?

If a person suspects they may have mpox, they must contact the healthcare services. After contact with a new sexual partner, it is especially important for a few weeks to look out for any symptoms. Healthcare clinics are listed on 1177.se.

How can I protect myself and others?

Avoiding close skin contact and sexual contact with people who have suspected mpox protects against infection. Condoms do not provide sufficient protection against mpox. If there are symptoms of mpox, you must avoid skin contact, and especially sexual contact, with others. This reduces the risk of mpox being transmitted.

Is a vaccine available?

There is a good vaccine against mpox. The vaccine can be given as a preventive measure to people who are at increased risk of being exposed to mpox. The vaccine can also be used after close physical contact with someone who has or is suspected of having mpox. The vaccine should then preferably be given within four days after contact. Contact the healthcare services for information or advice regarding vaccination. Decisions regarding who needs vaccination is always taken by a doctor on the basis of the recommendations issued by the Public Health Agency of Sweden.

In addition to vaccination, the following disease control measures are important ways of controlling the spread of mpox: sampling, contact tracing, rules of conduct and information. The vaccine offers good but not full protection against infection.