



CURRENT INFORMATION

Mpox

If you are concerned about symptoms that could indicate an MPOX infection, please contact your health care provider to receive appropriate care.

MPOX OUTBREAKS

A **new variant of the mpox virus**, known as subclade Ib, is spreading from the Democratic Republic of Congo to several countries in Central Africa (Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, as of early September 2024).

Transmission of this new clade presumably occurs again primarily through close physical contact with persons infected with mpox. Initial case reports for clade I indicate, on average, a more severe disease progression and higher mortality. However, it is currently unknown whether this also applies to clade Ib. The WHO therefore declared mid-August 2024 the increasing number of cases in Central African countries to be a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC).

In May 2022, cases of mpox and its spread outside Africa **were observed for the first time** as part of a global outbreak, amongst others in Germany. The infections were mainly transmitted through sexual contact between men who have sex with men and belonged to mpox clade II.

Map of affected regions:

https://worldhealthorg.shinyapps.io/mpx_global/



WHAT IS MPOX?

Mpox is caused by the mpox-virus (also called MPXV). Mpox is endemic in West and Central Africa. There are two genetic clades of Mpox – Clade I and Clade II. For most people, the disease is mild and usually heals by itself. However, in some cases, a severe disease course may occur (especially in children or individuals with a weakened immune system).

HOW ARE MPOX VIRUSES TRANSMITTED?

MPXV can spread via several ways:

- ▶ **Transmission from person to person** can occur through direct contact with infectious skin or with mucous membrane lesions, for example in the mouth or genital area. Close skin-to-skin contact occurs, for example, during hugging, kissing and sex.

- ▶ Transmission may also occur **indirectly by touching contaminated materials** that have been used by people with Mpox (for example towels, clothing, bed linen).
- ▶ **Zoonotic transmission from animals to humans** can occur through direct contact via bites or scratches with an Mpox-infected animal (various species of monkeys or rodents) or with the animal's body and its faeces (for example during activities such as hunting, skinning, trapping) and by eating meat from infected animals. This particular transmission route is not relevant for Germany.

Close skin-to-skin contact is currently considered to be the main way, in which the infection spreads to others. **Transmission of Mpox from person to person is possible from the onset of disease symptoms.**

You are no longer contagious until all the wounds, including the scab, have healed and fallen off and a new layer of skin has formed. This can take several weeks.

It is still unclear, whether Mpox can be transmitted through seminal fluid or vaginal secretions. As a precaution, people who have contracted Mpox should use a condom during sex for eight weeks after all lesions have healed.

WHAT ARE MPOX SYMPTOMS?

- ▶ Symptoms usually appear 4 to 21 days after contact with a person suffering from Mpox and last for about 2 to 4 weeks.
- ▶ **General symptoms** include fever, headache, muscle and back pain and swollen lymph nodes.
- ▶ Accompanying or a few days earlier or later, the **typical skin changes** may develop, which go through the stages spots to pustules and ultimately crust over and fall off.
- ▶ An Mpox infection can also proceed without any symptoms at all.

For images of typical skin lesions see:

www.rki.de/mpox-bilder





HOW TO AVOID INFECTIONS?

- ▶ Avoid close physical and sexual contact with a person suffering from Mpox. The use of condoms does not reliably protect against infection.
- ▶ Do not touch rashes or wounds and minimise skin contact.
- ▶ Avoid contact with personal items or objects used by a person with Mpox.
- ▶ Wash your hands thoroughly on a regular basis.
- ▶ Avoid contact with potentially infected animals in endemic areas, including eating them.

MPOX VACCINATION

- The Mpox vaccination is only recommended by the STIKO for certain people with an increased risk of exposure. Currently, these are in particular **men aged 18 and over who have sex with men and frequently change partners**.
- In the EU, the **smallpox vaccine Imvanex (Modified Vaccinia Ankara, Bavaria-Nordic [MVA-BN])** is authorised to protect people aged 18 and over against Mpox.
- **The vaccination provides the best protection if it is given preventively.** People who are recommended to be vaccinated should check their vaccination status and catch up on any necessary vaccinations as soon as possible.
- **Even after contact with a person infected with Mpox, prompt vaccination can reduce the risk of illness.** This so-called post-exposure vaccination should be given **within four days of contact**, if possible, and no later than 14 days after exposure.
- There is currently **no official STIKO travel vaccination recommendation** for protection against Mpox when travelling to Central Africa.
- **If you work in a region currently affected and you are potentially at risk of exposure** (for example working in disaster relief) or in emergency medical aid (Médecins Sans Frontières etc.), a **decision on vaccination can be made on an individual basis following a risk assessment**.
- Information on vaccination: www.rki.de/mpox-impfung (in German). For further information, please contact your health care provider.

WHAT TO DO ...

... IF YOU SUSPECT HAVING CONTRACTED MPOX?

- ▶ If you feel sick, watch out for sores, blisters or rashes on the body, including the area of your genitals and anus.
- ▶ Until you know your diagnosis, avoid meeting other people, especially if this involves close skin contact, and cover lesions carefully.
- ▶ Consult a doctor for clarification.

... IF YOU ARE INFECTED WITH MPOX?

- ▶ Practice good hand hygiene. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water.
- ▶ Avoid close physical contact until the scabs and crusts have completely healed and fallen off and no new lesions appear.
- ▶ Look out for symptoms and regularly check your skin, including areas that are not easily visible.
- ▶ Avoid contact with people with increased risk of severe disease progression if infected with mpox (pregnant women, children, immunocompromised and elderly people).
- ▶ Inform people, with whom you have had close physical contact since the start of your symptoms that they may be at risk of being exposed to mpox.
- ▶ Depending on the type and location of symptoms, graded rules for isolation apply - see "Home Isolation for Confirmed Mpox Infection" at www.rki.de/mpox-isolierung (in German).

FURTHER INFORMATION

ROBERT KOCH-INSTITUT

www.rki.de/mpox
www.rki.de/mpox-faq
www.rki.de/mpox-kontaktpersonen
www.rki.de/mpox-isolierung
www.rki.de/desinfektion



FEDERAL CENTRE FOR HEALTH EDUCATION

<https://bzga-k.de/mpox>



GERMAN AIDS SERVICE ORGANIZATION

www.aidshilfe.de/affenpocken



AUSWÄRTIGES AMT

www.auswaertiges-amt.de/de/ReiseUndSicherheit/reise-gesundheit/mpox/2532402

