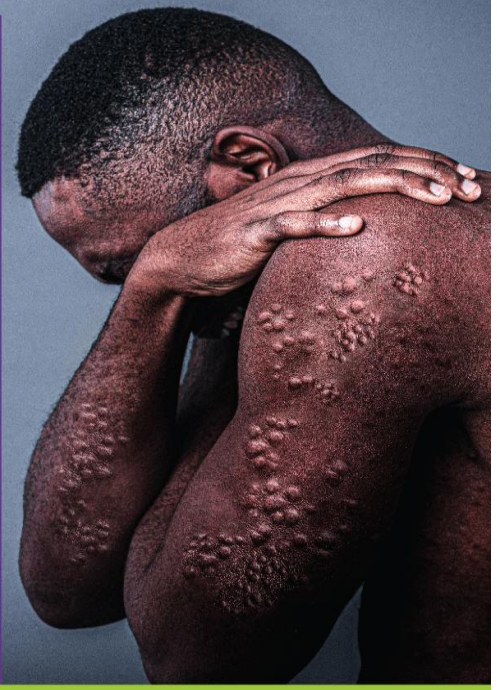
NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR COMMUNICABLE DISEASES
Division of the National Health Laboratory Service

# MPOX KEY FACTS

- Mpox is a viral illness causing a characteristic rash.
- The most common symptom of mpox is the rash. The rash consists of lesions which develop and resolve over the course of 2-4 weeks. There may be few or many lesions present. These lesions are blister-like and may feel firm or even rubbery. When more than one lesion is present, the lesions may appear to be the same size and shape.
- Other symptoms also include fever, headache, muscle aches, back pain, low energy, and swollen lymph nodes.
- Most people with mpox will recover within 2–4 weeks.
- In South Africa, mpox is mostly transmitted through close skin-to-skin contact. During the multi-country outbreak of mpox, sexual encounters are often associated with transmission.
- Laboratory confirmation of mpox is done by testing skin lesion material by PCR.
- Mpox can be prevented by avoiding physical contact with someone who has it.



**If you develop a rash or other signs or symptoms of mpox, see a doctor or visit your nearest healthcare centre.**

https://www.nicd.ac.za/mpox-updates

**NATIONAL HELPLINE: 0800 012 322**

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# Getting tested for mpox: What you need to know

## Why is testing for mpox important?

Testing is important in the fight to stop the spread of the virus. Knowing you have the virus, you can help protect others in your community. You can get suitable medical care for pain and infection management and can get access to social support and counselling if you need it.

## When to get tested for mpox?

You should get tested if your healthcare provider decides that mpox may explain signs and symptoms you may be experiencing. You should get tested if you experience mpox symptoms such as an unexplained skin rash, rash inside your mouth or genital area, lesions and swollen lymph nodes.

**If you do not have symptoms but think you have been exposed, talk to your healthcare provider for more information.**

## What happens when you test?

1. You will be placed in a private room in your healthcare facility, and your healthcare provider will be wearing appropriate personal protective equipment for sample collection.
2. A sample will be collected by swabbing your lesions and surrounding skin lesions. Material is the best sample type and most likely to give an accurate test result.
3. Your healthcare provider will then send your sample to a laboratory where it will be tested for the monkeypox virus; other possible causes of lesions may be tested for. Currently, the only reliable test is lab-based.
4. The lab wil contact your healthcare provider who will share and explain the result to you.
5. If you receive a positive result, your healthcare provider can advise you on your recovering in a facility or at home and help refer you to the relevant services, including medical, social support and counselling.
6. If you receive a negative results, your healthcare provider will provide advise considering other test results (if performed). If mpox is still suspected a retest should be performed.

## What to do while you wait for the test results?

You must self-isolate if you can, avoid close contact with other people, cover your lesions with fabric clothing and wear a well-fitted mask.

**Click here for mpox guildelines**
**https://www.nicd.ac.za/mpox-updates/**

## What happens with my results?

Results should be communicated and explained to you by your healthcare provider. You will receive advise on your care and how to limit spread to those close to you. In South Africa, mpox is a Category I notifiable medical condition and people that you may have had close contact for a certain period of time will be monitored for development of mpox.

HOTLINE FOR GENERAL ENQUIRIES **0800 012 322**
NICD HOTLINE FOR HEALTHCARE WORKERS **0800 212 552**
NICD LABORATORIES ENQUIRIES: **CEZD@NICD.AC.ZA**

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