

HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT THE MONKEYPOX VIRUS?

ON JUNE 23 THE FIRST CASE OF **MONKEYPOX** WAS CONFIRMED IN SOUTH AFRICA BY THE HEALTH MINISTER.

The National Institute for Communicable Diseases, stressed that there was no need for panic, but it was important to create an environment where people who presented with symptoms could be tested.

Monkeypox is caused by a pox virus that occurs mainly in wild animals, such as rodents and primates most common in West Africa, and has not been seen across the world in large numbers. It is a viral zoonosis, meaning it is transmitted from animals to humans.

ENTRANCE OF THE VIRUS INTO THE BODY IS VIA:

- Broken skin (even if not visible)
- Respiratory tract
- The mucous membranes (eyes, nose or mouth)

THIS IS WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

MONKEYPOX CAN BE SPREAD BY:

- Handling infected bush meat
- An animal bite or scratch
- Bodily fluids
- Contaminated objects
- Close contact with an infected person through large respiratory droplets. Prolonged face-to-face contact is required, as large respiratory droplets cannot travel more than a few feet
- Mother-to-foetus transmission

POSSIBLE RISK FACTORS:

- Individuals in contact with live or dead animals
- Individuals who consume wild game or bush meat
- Individuals who come in close contact with an infected individual

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS



The time from infection to symptoms (incubation period) for monkeypox is usually 7 to 14 days, but can range from 5 to 21 days. **The illness typically lasts for 2 to 4 weeks.**

An individual with monkeypox is considered contagious from the onset of the rash/lesions through the scab stage, not during the incubation phase. The individual will no longer be contagious once all scabs have fallen off.

SYMPTOMS OF MONKEYPOX START WITH:

- Fever
- Headache
- Muscle aches
- Exhaustion
- Backache
- Painful swollen lymph nodes

Within 1 to 3 days after the symptoms have started, a rash develops often beginning on the face and spreading to other parts of the body, mainly the hands and soles of the feet. The rash progresses through various stages before ending in scabs falling off.

PREVENTION & TREATMENT

Prevention centres mainly around:

- Avoiding close contact with individuals that are symptomatic during the infectious period;
- Isolating for the 2 weeks during the infection. Isolation may extend to 21 days, depending on how long the person is infectious;
- Washing of hands; and
- Avoiding contact with uncooked bush meat if you are in an endemic country.

Treatment:

Individuals who experience any of the symptoms should speak to their healthcare provider. The healthcare provider will take a swab from their skin and send it to the National Institute of Communicable Diseases for testing and initiate treatment if required.

Sources:

Momentum Health Solutions & World Health Organisation