



Clinical Recognition

Updated March 27, 2023

Key Characteristics for Identifying Mpox

- Lesions are firm or rubbery, well-circumscribed, deep-seated, and often develop umbilication (resembles a dot on the top of the lesion).
- During the current global outbreak:
 - Lesions often occur in the genital and anorectal areas or in the mouth.
 - Rash is not always disseminated across many sites on the body.
 - Rash may be confined to only a few lesions or only a single lesion.
 - Rash does not always appear on palms and soles.
- Rectal symptoms (e.g., purulent or bloody stools, rectal pain, or rectal bleeding) have been frequently reported in the current outbreak.
- Lesions are often described as painful until the healing phase when they become itchy (crusts).
- Fever and other prodromal symptoms (e.g., chills, lymphadenopathy, malaise, myalgias, or headache) can occur before rash but may occur after rash or not be present at all.
- Respiratory symptoms (e.g. sore throat, nasal congestion, or cough) can occur.

Examples of Mpox Rashes

Photo credit: UK Health Security Agency



Lesions typically develop simultaneously and evolve together on any given part of the body. The evolution of lesions progresses through four stages—macular, papular, vesicular, to pustular—before **scabbing over and desquamation**.

The incubation period is 3-17 days. During this time, a person does not have symptoms and may feel fine.

The illness typically lasts 2-4 weeks.

The severity of illness can depend upon the initial health of the individual and the route of exposure. The West African virus genetic group, or clade, which is the clade involved in the current outbreak, is associated with milder disease and fewer deaths than the Congo Basin virus clade.

Key Characteristics of Mpox Rash

More Mpox Rash Photos

Photo Credit: NHS England High Consequence Infectious Diseases Network



Clinical Resources

MONKEYPOX

What To Do If You Suspect Monkeypox

Early detection can help stop the spread of monkeypox. Know what to look for and what to do if you suspect monkeypox.

Signs and Symptoms

- A skin rash that appears as flat, red lesions that develop into vesicles and then pustules. Lesions may be deep-seated, firm, well-circumscribed and umbilicated. They will:
 - Appear anywhere on the body, including palms, soles and mucous membranes
 - Be located on a specific body site or surface
 - Be the only type of skin lesion
 - Be painful, itchy, or itchy
- Fever, headache, muscle aches, and lymphadenopathy may occur.
- Patients may present with mucous lesions, facial swelling, or encephalitis in association with visible pustules and lesions.

Ask the patient: Within the last 21 days, have you:


- Traveled to a country with recent monkeypox cases, one that's experienced a major outbreak?
- Had close or intimate contact with someone with a similar rash or confirmed monkeypox infection?
- Had close or intimate contact with someone in a social network experiencing a major outbreak?
- Had U.S. cases have been among gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men; had sex with someone they met on dating apps or via sex with multiple partners or commercial sex workers or sexually active people who are in contact.

www.cdc.gov/monkeypox

PRINTOUT
What To Do If You Suspect Mpox

File Details: 2 MB, 2 pages

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For information about skin and wound care for individuals with mpox lesions, please see [Mpox: Caring for the Skin](#)  [165 KB; 2 pages] [↗](#) and [Mpox: Treating Severe Lesions](#) [↗](#) .

Enanthem Through the Scab Stage

Stage	Stage Duration	Characteristics
Enanthem		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sometimes, lesions first form on the tongue and in the mouth.
Macules	1–2 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Macular lesions appear.
Papules	1–2 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lesions typically progress from macular (flat) to papular (raised).
Vesicles	1–2 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lesions then typically become vesicular (raised and filled with clear fluid).
Pustules	5–7 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lesions then typically become pustular (filled with opaque fluid) – sharply raised, usually round, and firm to the touch (deep seated).• Finally, lesions typically develop a depression in the center (umbilication).• The pustules will remain for approximately 5 to 7 days before beginning to crust.
Scabs	7–14 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• By the end of the second week, pustules have crusted and scabbed over.• Scabs will remain for about a week before beginning to fall off.

*This is a typical timeline, but timeline can vary.

Rash resolved

Pitted scars and/or areas of lighter or darker skin may remain after scabs have fallen off. Once all scabs have fallen off and a fresh layer of skin has formed, a person is no longer contagious.

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