

# 5 Tips for community health workers and vaccinators engaged in the mpox response

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Know and promote the key mpox related information – modes of transmission, signs and symptoms, prevention measures (including vaccination), treatment

## Signs, Symptoms & Known Modes of Transmission

Mpox is an enveloped virus endemic to Central and West Africa. While the natural reservoir of mpox virus remains unknown, it is thought to be spread by rodents, such as rats, mice, and squirrels.

### Incubation Period:

Signs and symptoms which usually begin within a week but can start 1–21 days after exposure.

### Infectious Period:

From the onset of symptoms until lesions have scabbed over and fully healed. Symptoms typically last 2–4 weeks but may last longer in someone with a weakened immune system. Common symptoms of mpox include a rash which may last for 2–4 weeks. This may start with, or be followed by: Fever, sore throat, headache, muscle aches, back pain, low energy, and, swollen glands (lymph nodes).

### Transmission Routes:

Close contact with an infected person, including:

Skin-to-skin contact (e.g., touching, sex)

Mouth-to-mouth or mouth-to-skin contact (e.g., kissing)

Face-to-face interaction (e.g., talking or breathing close to one another) Transmission from mother to baby during pregnancy or birth

Other transmission routes include:

Contact with contaminated objects (e.g. clothing, linen used by an infected person) Needle injuries in healthcare or community settings (e.g., tattoo parlours)

Animal-to-human transmission through bites, scratches, or handling infected animals (e.g., hunting, skinning, cooking)



**Treatment:**

There is no specific treatment for mpox, and most treatment is supportive to manage signs and symptoms. Most people fully recover within 2-4 weeks without the need for medical intervention, however the disease can cause more complicated illness for children, pregnant women, and people with weakened immune systems.

**Preventive Actions :**

- Avoiding physical or prolonged face-to-face contact (hand-shaking, touching, kissing or sexual contact) with someone who is showing symptoms of mpox. If someone in your family or household has mpox, arrange for them to isolate in a separate room, if possible, personal items should not be shared and seek health care.
- Avoiding contact with surfaces or items used by someone who has mpox
- Being aware of transmission routes, practicing safe sex (although it doesn't prevent the skin to skin contact), maintaining good personal hygiene and handwashing with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub
- Vaccination, particularly recommended for high-risk groups and direct contacts of patients (e.g health and care workers at risk of exposure, people who have multiple sex partners (both heterosexual and homosexual sex) and people living in the same household or have had contact with someone who has mpox) [3]
- Avoid contact with wild animals (alive or dead) known to carry the virus, such as rodents, and those that appear sick or have been found dead.

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Know and promote key messages on mpox and vaccination (general population and target groups) *[complete table of RCCE messages can be found in the annexes]*

Key audience	Key messages
General public, at-risk groups	Key message: Mpox is a viral illness that can affect anyone, regardless of their age, gender, sexual orientation, or lifestyle. It is important to have up-to-date and accurate information about the virus and its modes of transmission to prevent stigma and discrimination, as well as rumours and misinformation. Supporting messages:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Transmission of mpox is not limited to any specific group and misconceptions about its transmission can lead to stigma. For instance, in areas where the monkeypox virus is present in wildlife, people can contract the virus through direct contact with infected animals. In other places, the disease is affecting more children than adults.</li> <li>•Being informed about the current situation in your community is key to protecting yourself and your community.</li> <li>•Prevent misinformation by sharing only reliable, evidence-based and non-stigmatizing information from trustworthy sources, like your local health authorities or WHO. Avoid spreading unverified claims as these can contribute to fear and misinformation.</li> <li>•Stigma can deter people from seeking care or sharing information. It is crucial to use respectful language and treat individuals affected by mpox with compassion and support, rather than judgment.</li> <li>•Share trusted information about mpox with your community. Educating others helps create a more informed community and reduces stigma associated with the disease.</li> <li>•Encourage individuals to ask questions, share knowledge, and talk about mpox openly. Building a supportive community can help eliminate fear and misinformation.</li> </ul>
<p>General public, at-risk groups</p>	<p>Key message: Reduce your risk of catching mpox by limiting close contact with people who have suspected or confirmed mpox, practicing hand hygiene and staying informed.</p> <p>Supporting messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Avoid close contact with people who have a rash that looks like lesions or blisters or who show other symptoms of mpox.</li> <li>•Practice safe behaviours, including cleaning hands regularly with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, reducing close contact during outbreaks, to minimize the risk of transmission.</li> <li>•Avoid sharing personal items like towels or utensils, and practice good hygiene by washing your hands frequently. If you must share personal items, be sure to clean and disinfect them first.</li> <li>•If someone in your family or household has mpox, arrange for them to isolate in a separate room.</li> <li>•Follow local health authorities and trusted sources for updates on mpox. Stay aware of community resources available for testing, vaccination, and support.</li> </ul>
<p>Children</p>	<p>Key message: Mpox is an illness that can make people feel very sick. It can cause headaches, body ache, rash and fever. If you know or see someone who feels unwell or shows these symptoms, tell a teacher, parent or a trusted adult right away.</p> <p>Supporting messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•If someone is feeling unwell or has a rash, keep a safe distance. It's okay to say 'no' to hugs or close play until they get better.</li> <li>•Always wash your hands with soap and water, especially before eating and after playing outside. If soap is not available, you can use alcohol-based hand sanitizer to help keep germs away.</li> <li>•Do not share food or drinks with your friends because that is one way mpox can spread. Make sure you also do not share cups or utensils/cutlery.</li> <li>•If you feel scared or confused about mpox, talk to a parent, teacher, or trusted adult. It's okay to ask questions and share how you feel.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•You can share with your friends and family what you have learned about staying healthy and safe from mpox. You can all help protect each other.</li> <li>•Do not bully or tease friends if they have been sick. Anyone can get mpox and it’s important to be supportive and kind to your friends.</li> <li>•An open communication and solidarity with your friends and teachers will help fight the disease in your community</li> <li>•If you get sick with mpox, you may have to stay at home for a while until you are better. If you develop a rash during this time, try not to scratch or rub your skin and be sure to wash your hands often! That way you can protect your family and help keep them healthy and safe.</li> <li>•It can be hard to stay at home when you are sick and away from your friends, but it’s very important that you rest and drink plenty of water. If you have a brother or a sister, make sure that you do not share toys and other objects with them while you are sick. That is one way you can protect them from the virus.</li> </ul>
Caregivers	<p>Key message: Caregivers are at higher risk of mpox exposure. If you are caring for a loved one with mpox, take necessary precautions to protect yourself while supporting their recovery.</p> <p>Supporting messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•If you suspect that someone you are caring for has mpox, minimize direct contact and if possible, isolate them from other family members at home and notify local health authorities for further guidance. People with mpox should be isolated from other family or household members to reduce the risk of transmission.</li> <li>•Practice thorough hand hygiene before and after interacting with a person who has mpox or when handling their personal items such as bedding, clothing or cutlery. Use soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer to prevent further spread.</li> <li>•Always wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), such as gloves, medical masks and gowns, when caring for someone with mpox. Regularly disinfect or replace your equipment to minimize your risk of exposure.</li> <li>•If a vaccine is available, consider getting vaccinated yourself and encourage the person with mpox to do the same. A vaccine can significantly reduce infection risk before and even after being exposed to mpox.</li> <li>•Create an open line of communication with other caregivers. Share experiences and updates about best practices in caring for people with mpox to improve safety and collective knowledge in your community.</li> </ul>
Pregnant women	<p>Key message: Contracting mpox during pregnancy can be dangerous for the fetus or newborn infant and can lead to loss of the pregnancy, stillbirth, death of the newborn, or complications for the parent. If you think you have been exposed to or are showing symptoms that could be mpox, contact your healthcare provider immediately and get tested.</p> <p>Supporting messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Stay informed about mpox, its symptoms and how it spreads. Understanding the illness and practicing protective behaviours is the first step in keeping yourself and your unborn child safe.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•If you are pregnant, avoid close contact with anyone who is showing symptoms or has mpox. If you have been in close contact with someone who is diagnosed with mpox, contact your healthcare provider for advice and get tested.</li> <li>•To reduce the risk of contracting mpox, practice proper hygiene. Wash your hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer, especially after being in public spaces.</li> <li>•Keep your living space clean and sanitary. Regularly disinfect commonly touched surfaces to reduce the risk of illness for you and your baby.</li> <li>•Being pregnant can make your immune system more vulnerable to the virus. Discuss your vaccination options with your healthcare provider as they can help you weigh the benefits and risks associated with vaccination during your pregnancy.</li> <li>•Keep regular appointments with your healthcare provider during your pregnancy. Discuss any concerns or questions you might have about mpox and follow recommended advice from your doctor.</li> <li>•Pregnancy can be stressful, especially if you have health concerns. Don't hesitate to reach out to your partner, friends or family members for emotional support during this time.</li> </ul>
<p>Breastfeeding women with mpox</p>	<p>Key message: If you are a breastfeeding mother and have mpox, it is possible to pass the virus to your child through close contact, including when feeding. Contact your healthcare provider for guidance on how to manage you and your child's health and ensure safe breastfeeding practices.</p> <p>Supporting messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•If you are breastfeeding and suspect you have been exposed to mpox or are experiencing symptoms, contact your healthcare provider immediately, get tested and seek advice about vaccination if available. .</li> <li>•If you have been diagnosed with mpox, your health care provider will discuss breastfeeding options with you. It may be safer to continue breastfeeding your baby, or you may be recommended to stop for a short while or change feeding practices.</li> <li>•Breastfeeding might be delayed until criteria for discontinuing isolation have been met (i.e., all lesions have resolved, the scabs have fallen off, and a fresh layer of intact skin has formed), as young children have experienced severe illness during past outbreaks.</li> <li>•If it is not possible to provide safe feeding solutions for the non-breastfed infant/child, breastfeeding can continue with intensive surveillance of the infant/child's health status and application of IPC measures such as using a fresh blanket to swaddle the infant/child and the mother wearing gloves and a fresh gown for each breastfeeding session.</li> <li>•If you choose to continue breastfeeding, prioritize hygiene. Wash your hands and breasts thoroughly with soap and water before and after feeding. Wear a medical mask to minimize the risk of spreading the virus, and ensure your breast pump and any feeding accessories are sterilized to avoid contamination. Cover any sores while breastfeeding.</li> <li>•If you are experiencing severe symptoms such as high fever and a rash with open sores, breastfeeding may be difficult and the risk of passing mpox to your baby may be higher. Discuss options with your healthcare provider including breastmilk alternatives to feed your baby, if required.</li> <li>•If you do stop breastfeeding, seek advice on stopping your milk production gradually. Stopping suddenly can put you at risk of mastitis. You can consider expressing milk to</li> </ul>

	<p>maintain your supply so you can continue breastfeeding again when you are better if you want to.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•If you have severe mpox, try to limit close contact with your baby until your symptoms are completely gone. If possible, find a healthy caregiver to provide feeding while you manage your recovery. This could be someone else breastfeeding your baby (wet-nurse) or someone supporting you with alternative milk feeding.</li> <li>•Focus on your recovery by staying hydrated, getting plenty of rest and following other recommendations and guidance made by your healthcare provider.</li> <li>•Monitor your baby for any signs of illness. If your baby develops a rash, fever, or any other symptoms of mpox, contact your pediatrician immediately.</li> <li>•If your baby or child has mpox and you are breastfeeding, consult your healthcare provider and follow the same steps outlined here, prioritizing hygiene and limiting skin to skin contact as practical.</li> <li>•Breastfeeding can be stressful, especially if you have health concerns and you don't feel well. Don't hesitate to contact your partner, friends or family members for emotional support during this time and talk to your healthcare provider about all your breastfeeding questions and options.</li> </ul>
<p>Targeted groups for vaccination (health workers, close contacts, groups at risk)</p>	<p>Key message: Mpox is a preventable disease, and vaccination is an important part of stopping the spread of the virus. If you fall within an at-risk group, particularly in an area with an outbreak of mpox and where vaccines are available, consider vaccination against mpox as soon as possible.</p> <p>Supporting messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Mpox vaccines can protect from infection or severe disease</li> <li>• vaccines are recommended for people who have been close contacts of someone who has mpox, or people who belong to a group at high risk of exposure to mpox, and health workers (exposed to mpox)</li> <li>•If you are at high risk of contracting mpox - get vaccinated. It takes four weeks after being vaccinated to develop immunity (or two weeks after a 2-dose vaccine).</li> <li>•If you think you have been exposed to mpox, post-exposure vaccination is recommended, ideally within 4 days from possible exposure.</li> </ul>

**3** Listen and establish a dialogue with patients receiving care and those seeking the mpox vaccine

- ✓ Build relationships and address questions and concerns
- ✓ Express sympathy and that the health and well-being of the child/patient/family is a shared interest
- ✓ Establish mutual trust, through verbal and non-verbal communication channels
- ✓ Put patients/people at ease
- ✓ Listen and demonstrate a respectful attitude towards parents' concerns
- ✓ Provide feedback
- ✓ Avoid judgments
- ✓ Connect to the particular patient/parent's situation

Simple and clear words - not scientific terms - **adapted to your audience** background and language

Be sincere and honest - don't make false promises or make up answers to questions

Listen to communities before you start talking.

Find out what they already know about the disease and add to their knowledge or answer questions.

Before sharing information find out the rumours and beliefs in the communities

Explain things clearly and give reasons - don't just say drink safe water, but explain why this is important

Be humble, give the community a chance to speak as much as you and respect peoples' views

Check people understand you by asking them to repeat or summarise key information

Be well prepared before visiting the community and know what you want to say

Coordinate messages across the whole team

Look at people when talking to them and maintain eye contact

Keep calm and express views gently

Show interest and respect by not interrupting people and listening to everyone

Understanding and empathizing with people's problems

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Collect and understand the rumors related to mpox and know how to address them

Don't ignore rumors because they can:

- ✓ Harm the field interventions
- ✓ Put people in danger
- ✓ Consider instead that rumors constitute an early warning system. Harness them for good and use them to improve the work
- ✓ Address critical issues to protect communities, staff and volunteers.
- ✓ Discuss rumors in meetings with supervisors, other health workers and communities

Some of the most common mpox-related rumors circulating:

### Is mpox a laboratory made virus?

Mpox, formerly known as monkeypox, has been known since 1958. The first human case of mpox was documented in 1970 in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The disease became of continental and international concern because it caused a global outbreak in 2022 and 2023, and because of the emergence of a new variant of mpox that is spreading rapidly in eastern DRC, and several neighbouring countries. Mpox is a highly contagious virus that spreads from animal to human and person to person through close contact.

### Does the traditional medicine cure mpox?

There is no cure for mpox, just supportive care, such as medication for pain or fever. Moreover, some patients can experience severe manifestations of the disease. For this reason, it is

important to seek medical help and follow the treatment recommended by health workers, which has proved to be safe and appropriate.

### **Isn't this is a ploy to introduce another useless vaccine?**

When an outbreak like mpox occurs, health experts focus on finding the best ways to stop the spread of the disease. Vaccination is one of the available methods that can help stopping the transmission of the disease. Many years of research have led to the development of newer and safer vaccines that are effective in reducing the spread.

### **Is there a link between mpox and COVID-19 vaccines?**

Mpox is a disease caused by a virus that has been known since 1958. COVID-19 vaccines are used for the prevention of COVID-19 and do not contain any ingredient related to mpox. There is no relationship between mpox disease and the use of COVID-19 vaccines.

### **Is lockdown part of the preventive measures?**

Because mpox primarily spreads through close physical contact, experts do not recommend a lockdown as a prevention measure for mpox. Although mpox is spreading rapidly and is a cause of concern, the measures being put in place by governments and ministries of health should be able to control the outbreak.

### **Will mpox vaccines be a failure like Covid-19 vaccines?**

Studies have shown COVID-19 vaccines successfully protected millions of people and were a key factor in helping return to the normal way of life. Although the sudden emergence of mpox can be alarming after living through the COVID-19 pandemic, COVID19 and mpox are completely different viruses with different symptoms, transmission dynamics and therefore different vaccinations.

### **Is there any specific group of people that spread mpox?**

Mpox is transmitted through close contact with an infected person, animal, or contaminated materials. This close contact includes skin-to-skin or mouth to skin contact, bodily fluids, and touching contaminated objects like clothing or bedding. Anyone, regardless of their sexual orientation, can contract and spread the mpox virus if they have close contact with an infected person. No one group of people are responsible for the spread of mpox virus.

### **Are monkeys the main carriers of mpox?**

Many species of animals are known to be susceptible to the mpox virus. However, mpox can also be transmitted through close contact with infected persons or contaminated materials. This close contact includes skin-to-skin or mouth to skin contact, bodily fluids, and touching contaminated objects like clothing or bedding. The risk of getting mpox from animals can be reduced by avoiding unprotected contact with infected animals, especially those that are sick or dead. In countries where animals carry the virus, any food containing animal parts or meat should be cooked thoroughly before eating.



## Identify and contribute to ending the stigma linked to mpox

### How does stigma relate to mpox?

Mpox infections are quite visible with distinctive lesions appearing all over the body, including the hands and the face, which can provoke fear on other people . People can contract mpox from diseased or dead animals, and from direct contact with people infected with mpox, such as within their household, including through intimate sexual contact.

*“While the risk is not limited to these groups, due to the 2022 main infection dynamics, had become an additional focus for stigma and discrimination directed against men who have sex with men, trans people and broader lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer and intersex communities and their families . Similarly, stigma, discrimination and other expressions of racism towards communities from previously affected regions has increased as a result of the 2022 outbreak.”*

WHO (2022) Risk communication and community engagement public health advice on understanding, preventing and addressing stigma and discrimination related to mpox.

### How does stigma impact people and the mpox response?

- ✓ People may not want to identify themselves as potentially having mpox if they fear being stigmatized by their family, community or health workers.
- ✓ People with mpox may fear seeking treatment because they may be forced to isolate in a dedicated facility, away from their family, which can stigmatize them and their families.
- ✓ Contact tracers who interview people suspected of having mpox may not receive truthful answers about contacts, including sexual contacts, because patients fear being stigmatized or reported as sex workers, or fear being labeled as having light sex and/or homosexual.

### What can you do to fight stigma?

- ✓ Work within existing health and social networks to reach priority populations and seek advice from experts and associations in these communities on data collection approaches and tools. For example, to identify sex workers infected with mpox, work with the HIV programme.
- ✓ Conduct interviews with empathy and protect patient privacy when collecting information on sensitive topics.
- ✓ Provide patients with adequate supportive care, space in an isolation unit that protects their privacy, prevents disease transmission, and allows them to maintain contact with their families.
- ✓ Work/collaborate with individuals who are part of priority populations who have recovered from mpox as peer supports to assist individuals and families affected by mpox.

- ✓ Avoid stigmatizing terms that associate people with an illness or refer to people by a condition.
- ✓ Communicate clearly about the different clades/variants in circulation and the different modes of transmission that pose a risk to people in the local context.
- ✓ Mpox and HIV are potentially stigmatized diseases. Avoid comparisons to reduce confusion or accidentally spread misinformation.
- ✓ Work with organizations and community networks for communities experiencing discrimination to generate more accurate population estimates (and other types of data) to inform vaccination microplanning.
- ✓ Understand the role that stigma plays in the perception of the vaccine, the vaccinator, the health system and the people prioritized for vaccination.
- ✓ Identify ways to reach people from communities affected by stigmatization to call them back for a second dose.
- ✓ Link mpox vaccination with non-stigmatized health and social services, such as the provision of condoms and blood pressure checks for adults, and catch up on routine vaccinations, nutritional counseling and vitamin supplements A for children.

## Annex – RCCE Key Messages

Key audience	Key messages
General public, at-risk groups	<p>Key message: If you have had close contact with someone with mpox, you may be at risk. Stay informed about the symptoms and monitor your health closely.</p> <p>Supporting messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Mpox illness usually lasts 2-4 weeks and people with the virus may experience all or only a few symptoms which may include fever, body aches, swollen lymph nodes, and a rash that develops into lesions. If you experience any of these symptoms, isolate at home, contact your local healthcare provider and get tested.</li> <li>•If someone in your family or household has mpox, arrange for them to isolate in a separate room, if possible.</li> <li>•Have open conversations with those you come into close contact with (including sexual contact) about any symptoms you or they may have.</li> </ul>
General public, at-risk groups	<p>Key message: Mpox is a viral illness that can affect anyone, regardless of their age, gender, sexual orientation, or lifestyle. It is important to have up-to-date and accurate information about the virus and its modes of transmission to prevent stigma and discrimination, as well as rumours and misinformation.</p> <p>Supporting messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Transmission of mpox is not limited to any specific group and misconceptions about its transmission can lead to stigma. For instance, in areas where the monkeypox virus is present in wildlife, people can contract the virus through direct contact with infected animals. In other places, the disease is affecting more children than adults.</li> <li>•Being informed about the current situation in your community is key to protecting yourself and your community.</li> <li>•Prevent misinformation by sharing only reliable, evidence-based and non-stigmatizing information from trustworthy sources, like your local health authorities or WHO. Avoid spreading unverified claims as these can contribute to fear and misinformation.</li> <li>•Stigma can deter people from seeking care or sharing information. It is crucial to use respectful language and treat individuals affected by mpox with compassion and support, rather than judgment.</li> <li>•Share trusted information about mpox with your community. Educating others helps create a more informed community and reduces stigma associated with the disease.</li> <li>•Encourage individuals to ask questions, share knowledge, and talk about mpox openly. Building a supportive community can help eliminate fear and misinformation.</li> </ul>
General public, at-risk groups	<p>Key message: Reduce your risk of catching mpox by limiting close contact with people who have suspected or confirmed mpox, practicing hand hygiene and staying informed.</p>

	<p>Supporting messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Avoid close contact with people who have a rash that looks like lesions or blisters or who show other symptoms of mpox.</li> <li>•Practice safe behaviours, including cleaning hands regularly with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, reducing close contact during outbreaks, to minimize the risk of transmission.</li> <li>•Avoid sharing personal items like towels or utensils, and practice good hygiene by washing your hands frequently. If you must share personal items, be sure to clean and disinfect them first.</li> <li>•If someone in your family or household has mpox, arrange for them to isolate in a separate room.</li> <li>•Follow local health authorities and trusted sources for updates on mpox. Stay aware of community resources available for testing, vaccination, and support.</li> </ul>
Children	<p>Key message: Mpox is an illness that can make people feel very sick. It can cause headaches, body ache, rash and fever. If you know or see someone who feels unwell or shows these symptoms, tell a teacher, parent or a trusted adult right away.</p> <p>Supporting messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•If someone is feeling unwell or has a rash, keep a safe distance. It's okay to say 'no' to hugs or close play until they get better.</li> <li>•Always wash your hands with soap and water, especially before eating and after playing outside. If soap is not available, you can use alcohol-based hand sanitizer to help keep germs away.</li> <li>•Do not share food or drinks with your friends because that is one way mpox can spread. Make sure you also do not share cups or utensils/cutlery.</li> <li>•If you feel scared or confused about mpox, talk to a parent, teacher, or trusted adult. It's okay to ask questions and share how you feel.</li> <li>•You can share with your friends and family what you have learned about staying healthy and safe from mpox. You can all help protect each other.</li> <li>•Do not bully or tease friends if they have been sick. Anyone can get mpox and it's important to be supportive and kind to your friends.</li> <li>•An open communication and solidarity with your friends and teachers will help fight the disease in your community</li> <li>•If you get sick with mpox, you may have to stay at home for a while until you are better. If you develop a rash during this time, try not to scratch or rub your skin and be sure to wash your hands often! That way you can protect your family and help keep them healthy and safe.</li> <li>•It can be hard to stay at home when you are sick and away from your friends, but it's very important that you rest and drink plenty of water. If you have a brother or a sister, make sure that you do not share toys and other objects with them while you are sick. That is one way you can protect them from the virus.</li> </ul>
Caregivers	<p>Key message: Caregivers are at higher risk of mpox exposure. If you are caring for a loved one with mpox, take necessary precautions to protect yourself while supporting their recovery.</p> <p>Supporting messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•If you suspect that someone you are caring for has mpox, minimize direct contact and if possible, isolate them from other family members at home and notify local health authorities for further guidance. People with mpox should be isolated from other family or household members to reduce the risk of transmission.</li> <li>•Practice thorough hand hygiene before and after interacting with a person who has mpox or when handling their personal items such as bedding, clothing or cutlery. Use soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer to prevent further spread.</li> <li>•Always wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), such as gloves, medical masks and gowns, when caring for someone with mpox. Regularly disinfect or replace your equipment to minimize your risk of exposure.</li> <li>•If a vaccine is available, consider getting vaccinated yourself and encourage the person with mpox to do the same. A vaccine can significantly reduce infection risk before and even after being exposed to mpox.</li> <li>•Create an open line of communication with other caregivers. Share experiences and updates about best practices in caring for people with mpox to improve safety and collective knowledge in your community.</li> </ul>
Pregnant women	<p>Key message: Contracting mpox during pregnancy can be dangerous for the fetus or newborn infant and can lead to loss of the pregnancy, stillbirth, death of the newborn, or complications for the parent. If you think you have been exposed to or are showing symptoms that could be mpox, contact your healthcare provider immediately and get tested.</p>

	<p>Supporting messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stay informed about mpox, its symptoms and how it spreads. Understanding the illness and practicing protective behaviours is the first step in keeping yourself and your unborn child safe.</li> <li>• If you are pregnant, avoid close contact with anyone who is showing symptoms or has mpox. If you have been in close contact with someone who is diagnosed with mpox, contact your healthcare provider for advice and get tested.</li> <li>• To reduce the risk of contracting mpox, practice proper hygiene. Wash your hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer, especially after being in public spaces.</li> <li>• Keep your living space clean and sanitary. Regularly disinfect commonly touched surfaces to reduce the risk of illness for you and your baby.</li> <li>• Being pregnant can make your immune system more vulnerable to the virus. Discuss your vaccination options with your healthcare provider as they can help you weigh the benefits and risks associated with vaccination during your pregnancy.</li> <li>• Keep regular appointments with your healthcare provider during your pregnancy. Discuss any concerns or questions you might have about mpox and follow recommended advice from your doctor.</li> <li>• Pregnancy can be stressful, especially if you have health concerns. Don't hesitate to reach out to your partner, friends or family members for emotional support during this time.</li> </ul>
<p>Breastfeeding women with mpox</p>	<p>Key message: If you are a breastfeeding mother and have mpox, it is possible to pass the virus to your child through close contact, including when feeding. Contact your healthcare provider for guidance on how to manage you and your child's health and ensure safe breastfeeding practices.</p> <p>Supporting messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you are breastfeeding and suspect you have been exposed to mpox or are experiencing symptoms, contact your healthcare provider immediately, get tested and seek advice about vaccination if available. .</li> <li>• If you have been diagnosed with mpox, your health care provider will discuss breastfeeding options with you. It may be safer to continue breastfeeding your baby, or you may be recommended to stop for a short while or change feeding practices.</li> <li>• Breastfeeding might be delayed until criteria for discontinuing isolation have been met (i.e., all lesions have resolved, the scabs have fallen off, and a fresh layer of intact skin has formed), as young children have experienced severe illness during past outbreaks.</li> <li>• If it is not possible to provide safe feeding solutions for the non-breastfed infant/child, breastfeeding can continue with intensive surveillance of the infant/child's health status and application of IPC measures such as using a fresh blanket to swaddle the infant/child and the mother wearing gloves and a fresh gown for each breastfeeding session.</li> <li>• If you choose to continue breastfeeding, prioritize hygiene. Wash your hands and breasts thoroughly with soap and water before and after feeding. Wear a medical mask to minimize the risk of spreading the virus, and ensure your breast pump and any feeding accessories are sterilized to avoid contamination. Cover any sores while breastfeeding.</li> <li>• If you are experiencing severe symptoms such as high fever and a rash with open sores, breastfeeding may be difficult and the risk of passing mpox to your baby may be higher. Discuss options with your healthcare provider including breastmilk alternatives to feed your baby, if required.</li> <li>• If you do stop breastfeeding, seek advice on stopping your milk production gradually. Stopping suddenly can put you at risk of mastitis. You can consider expressing milk to maintain your supply so you can continue breastfeeding again when you are better if you want to.</li> <li>• If you have severe mpox, try to limit close contact with your baby until your symptoms are completely gone. If possible, find a healthy caregiver to provide feeding while you manage your recovery. This could be someone else breastfeeding your baby (wet-nurse) or someone supporting you with alternative milk feeding.</li> <li>• Focus on your recovery by staying hydrated, getting plenty of rest and following other recommendations and guidance made by your healthcare provider.</li> <li>• Monitor your baby for any signs of illness. If your baby develops a rash, fever, or any other symptoms of mpox, contact your pediatrician immediately.</li> <li>• If your baby or child has mpox and you are breastfeeding, consult your healthcare provider and follow the same steps outlined here, prioritizing hygiene and limiting skin to skin contact as practical.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Breastfeeding can be stressful, especially if you have health concerns and you don't feel well. Don't hesitate to contact your partner, friends or family members for emotional support during this time and talk to your healthcare provider about all your breastfeeding questions and options.</li> </ul>
Targeted groups for vaccination (health workers, close contacts, groups at risk)	<p>Key message: Mpox is a preventable disease, and vaccination is an important part of stopping the spread of the virus. If you fall within an at-risk group, particularly in an area with an outbreak of mpox and where vaccines are available, consider vaccination against mpox as soon as possible.</p> <p>Supporting messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Mpox vaccines can protect from infection or severe disease</li> <li>• vaccines are recommended for people who have been close contacts of someone who has mpox, or people who belong to a group at high risk of exposure to mpox, and health workers (exposed to mpox)</li> <li>•If you are at high risk of contracting mpox - get vaccinated. It takes four weeks after being vaccinated to develop immunity (or two weeks after a 2-dose vaccine).</li> <li>•If you think you have been exposed to mpox, post-exposure vaccination is recommended, ideally within 4 days from possible exposure.</li> </ul>
People with suspected or confirmed mpox	<p>Key message: If you have mpox, you should isolate at home or in a healthcare facility until you are no longer infectious in order to protect others. You can do this safely, even if you live with others, by avoiding close contact and being careful about hygiene and sanitation.</p> <p>Supporting messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•If you begin to experience symptoms or test positive for mpox, isolate at home to prevent the virus's spread. Contact your healthcare provider right away for guidance on testing and treatment.</li> <li>•Your healthcare provider will help you decide if you should be cared for in hospital or at home. This will depend on your current condition, whether you have risk factors that make you susceptible to developing more serious symptoms, and whether you can minimize the risk of infecting anyone you live with.</li> <li>•If you are experiencing symptoms of mpox, wash your hands frequently with soap and water or hand sanitizer, especially before and after touching sores.</li> <li>•If you have tested positive, isolate yourself from others until your rash has crusted over, the scabs have fallen off and a new layer of skin grows underneath. This will help protect anyone else from becoming infected.</li> <li>•To protect others from transmission, wear a medical mask and cover lesions when around other people until your rash heals, avoid touching items in shared spaces and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.</li> <li>•If you are isolating at home, protect others you live with by self-isolating in a separate room, open windows and if possible, using a separate bathroom, or cleaning after each use.</li> <li>•While you are still infectious, it is important not to share items such as utensils, towels, objects, electronics and bedding, and to avoid close contact. If you must share items, make sure they are completely cleaned between uses.</li> <li>•Having mpox can be stressful. Consider reaching out to trusted friends, family members or peer support groups to talk about your experiences if you feel this might help.</li> <li>•If you are isolated at home, you may need support with shopping or getting basic supplies. Consider asking your friends, family or neighbours for help should you need to. Make sure they leave your groceries or supplies at the door, so you can avoid close contact.</li> </ul>
Health Workers	<p>Key message: Health workers are at higher risk for exposure to mpox. Be aware of your risks and mpox symptoms and adhere to infection prevention and control measures to protect yourself.</p> <p>Supporting messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•If you are caring for patients with mpox, you are at increased risk of being exposed to the virus. Stay vigilant and monitor yourself for any symptoms.</li> <li>•Be familiar with the symptoms of mpox, which can include fever, headache, muscle aches, swollen lymph nodes, and a skin rash which changes over time. If you experience any of these symptoms, act promptly.</li> <li>•Ensure you properly use PPE when caring for patients with mpox, including wearing gloves, gowns, respirators, and eye protection, as required by your local health authorities.</li> </ul>
Health Workers	<p>Key message: If you are exposed to mpox, be sure to follow recommended procedures and isolate, seek testing, and vaccination where possible. It is also important to report cases to health authorities.</p> <p>Supporting messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•If you think you may have been exposed to mpox, quickly seek guidance from your occupational health department, a health care provider or local public health authority.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Be familiar with the symptoms of mpox, which can include fever, headache, muscle aches, swollen lymph nodes, and a skin rash which changes over time. If you develop any mpox-like symptoms, self-isolate immediately. Seek guidance from your healthcare supervisor regarding testing and further actions.</li> <li>•If you are not already vaccinated against mpox, consult with your occupational health department, a healthcare provider or local public health authority about the availability of vaccine, particularly if you've had high-risk exposure.</li> <li>•Report any suspected exposure to your healthcare facility's infection control team immediately. Timely reporting allows for proper assessment and necessary follow-up measures.</li> </ul>
Health Workers	<p>Key message: One of the best ways to stay safe, on and off the job, is to stay informed and communicate clearly about mpox. Stay up to date on the latest recommendations and best practices related to mpox and take care of your health.</p> <p>Supporting messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Keep up to date and feel free to ask for the latest guidance and recommendations from local health authorities regarding mpox management, exposure, and infection control practices.</li> <li>•Connect with your colleagues for support and information sharing. Maintaining open lines of communication can help alleviate stress and ensure everyone is informed about best practices.</li> <li>•Take care of your mental and emotional health. Facing infectious diseases can be daunting. Seek support or use available mental health resources to help manage stress and anxiety.</li> <li>•Share information about mpox with your patients and fellow health workers. Educating and promote open dialogues with others helps create a more informed community and reduces the stigma associated with the disease.</li> </ul>
Sex workers and their clients	<p>Key message: While mpox can affect anyone, sex workers and people with multiple sexual partners are at higher risk of being exposed to the virus. If possible, reduce your risks by limiting the number of your sexual partners or clients and getting vaccinated, if the vaccine is available to you.</p> <p>Supporting messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Check yourself regularly for symptoms such as fever, body aches, swollen lymph nodes or a rash. If you develop any symptoms, contact your local healthcare provider and avoid having sex until you get tested for mpox.</li> <li>•Clean your hands regularly using soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Wash clothing, bedding, towels, objects and surfaces more often than usual. For example, change towels and bed sheets between clients, if possible. Clean objects, surfaces, sex toys and electronic gadgets with soap and water and household disinfectant.</li> <li>•If it is possible, avoid close contact with family, friends, housemates, partners or clients who have or may have mpox. If a client has symptoms that could be mpox, such as rash or lesions, swollen lymph nodes, consider waiting until after they have a test result to have sex.</li> <li>•Have open, non-judgmental conversations with close contacts, partners and clients. If safe, appropriate and possible, exchange contact details so that you can let each other know if you get symptoms, even if you were not planning to see each other again.</li> <li>•One way to reduce your risk of contracting mpox is to consider limiting the number of sexual partners, if it is realistic for you to do so. Condoms will prevent some STIs. Because they act as a barrier, they may reduce your risk and could help reduce painful symptoms should you get mpox, but they will not fully prevent you from acquiring the virus from sexual contact and skin to skin contact.</li> <li>•If you are eligible, get vaccinated against mpox. Vaccination is a powerful tool in preventing infection and protecting you, your sexual partners and your community.</li> </ul>
People with multiple sexual partners,	<p>Key message: While mpox can affect anyone, people with multiple sexual partners including sex workers, their clients, and heterosexual or homosexuall people with multiple partners, are at higher risk of contracting mpox. Reduce your risk by limiting the number of your sexual partners and getting vaccinated, if the vaccine is available to you.</p> <p>Supporting messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Check yourself regularly for symptoms and ask your sexual partners to do the same. If you develop symptoms such as fever, body aches, swollen lymph nodes or a rash, contact your local healthcare provider.</li> <li>•Reduce the risk of getting mpox by reducing the number of sexual partners you have or by taking a break from sex until you get tested for mpox. Avoiding activities like group sex and sex-on-premises venues (saunas, sex clubs or bars) can also reduce your risk of acquiring mpox.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•If you are eligible, get vaccinated against mpox. Vaccination is a powerful tool in preventing infection and protecting you, your sexual partners and your community.</li> <li>•If you’ve had a vaccine, be aware that full protection can take up to four weeks after a 1-dose vaccine or two weeks after the second dose of a 2-dose vaccine – limit the number of your sexual partners until you have full protection.</li> <li>•Have open, non-judgmental conversations about mpox. Swap contact details with new sexual partners and agree to let each other know if you develop symptoms or feel unwell.</li> <li>•Condoms will prevent some STIs (sexually transmitted infections). Because they act as a barrier, they may reduce your risk and could help reduce painful symptoms should you get mpox, but they will not fully prevent you from acquiring the virus from sexual contact and skin to skin contact.</li> </ul>
<p>People living with HIV including those who are not aware of their HIV status</p>	<p>Key message: People with undiagnosed HIV and/or advanced HIV disease are more likely to develop severe symptoms and complications from mpox. Reduce your risk of severe mpox by knowing your HIV status, by being consistent with your HIV treatment and getting vaccinated against mpox, if the vaccine is available to you.</p> <p>Supporting messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•If you think you could have HIV or don’t know your status, get tested. If you test positive for HIV, taking antiretroviral therapy will reduce your risk of severe mpox disease.</li> <li>•People living with HIV who achieve viral suppression through antiretroviral treatment do not appear to be at any higher risk of severe mpox than the general population. Keep up with your HIV treatments and get tested if you think you may have mpox.</li> <li>•If you have missed appointments or your HIV care and treatment has been interrupted for some reason, it is important that you re-engage with services as soon as possible to ensure you have the best possible protection should you be exposed to mpox or other viruses.</li> <li>•Keeping your HIV under control through consistent treatment can help strengthen your immune system, making it easier for your body to fight off infections like mpox. If you have been in close contact with someone with mpox or are experiencing symptoms, seek immediate medical advice and get tested.</li> <li>•Mpox treatments are safe and may be used to treat people living with HIV. If you have HIV, ask your healthcare provider about what mpox treatment you should consider if you develop any symptoms or fall ill. Get vaccinated if the vaccine is available to you.</li> <li>•Have open, non-judgmental conversations about mpox with your sexual partners and the people around you. Stay in touch and let each other know if you get mpox symptoms.</li> <li>•If you don’t have HIV but have been prescribed pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) or post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) to prevent HIV infection, keep taking your medicine as prescribed. PrEP and PEP are still effective even if you get mpox and you are receiving mpox treatment.</li> </ul>
<p>People who are traveling</p>	<p>Key message: If you have travelled to areas or participated in events where mpox cases have been reported or have had close contact with someone suspected or confirmed to have mpox, you may be at risk. Stay informed about your potential exposure, check yourself for symptoms and get vaccinated, if the vaccine is available.</p> <p>Supporting messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Before travelling or attending the event, check for health advice related to mpox on your journey or at your destination. You may be at risk if you are in contact with someone with mpox during your journey, during events you attend, at your destination, or on your return journey. Make sure you carefully follow the local public health recommendations.</li> <li>•Be vigilant for symptoms of mpox, such as fever, rash, swollen lymph nodes, and body aches. If you start experiencing any of these symptoms, do not wait—seek medical attention immediately.</li> <li>•If you think you may have been exposed to mpox or develop symptoms after travelling or at an event, inform your healthcare provider about your travel dates, locations and activities. This information can aid in a timely evaluation and appropriate testing.</li> <li>•Wash your hands frequently, use soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, and avoid close contact with people who are sick. Good hygiene reduces your risk of infection during and after your travels.</li> <li>•If you believe you may have been exposed to mpox while traveling or at an event and you develop symptoms, contact a local health facility to arrange for testing as soon as possible. Early diagnosis is key to effective treatment and preventing further transmission.</li> <li>•Look for travel health guidance or local public health information that provides guidance on mpox. Familiarize yourself with testing and vaccination options available upon return to your home country.</li> </ul>

<p>Hunters and people handling or preparing wildlife or its parts</p>	<p>Key message: Make sure you are up to date with the latest information about mpox outbreaks reported in certain regions. Mpox is a viral disease that can affect both humans and animals. Humans can be infected by scratches and bites from infected animals or during activities such as hunting, skinning, trapping, or preparing a meal which is not cooked thoroughly.</p> <p>Supporting messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Familiarize yourself with the symptoms of mpox and discuss safety measures with your fellow hunters. Always wear gloves when field dressing and thoroughly wash your hands and any tools post-hunt.</li> <li>•Take precautions to avoid being bitten or scratched by wild animals.</li> <li>•Keep your children away from wild animals or hunting practices that may be unsafe.</li> <li>•If you encounter wildlife that appears ill (such as lesions or unusual behaviour), do not touch the animal and report it to local wildlife authorities immediately.</li> <li>•Do not touch, or allow your children to touch, any animals which are already dead.</li> <li>•Ensure all game meat or food containing game parts is cooked at safe temperatures before eating, to eliminate potential risks.</li> <li>•For more information about safe preparation of food please read WHO’s “Five Keys to Safer Food manual”.</li> <li>•Check for local health advice and wildlife reports in your hunting areas. If specific regions or animals are highlighted by local community leaders or health authorities, consider adjusting your hunting plans accordingly.</li> </ul>
<p>People with mpox who might have contact with live animals</p>	<p>Key message: If you have mpox, avoid direct contact with animals, including domestic pets, livestock, and other captive animals, as well as wildlife until your mpox symptoms have fully resolved (scabs have fallen off).</p> <p>Supporting messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Animals can get infected too. Avoid close contact with your domestic animals (pets or livestock) if you have mpox. Ask your neighbour or a friend to take care of your animals until you have fully recovered.</li> <li>•We know you love your pet. If you have mpox do not pet, cuddle, hug, kiss, share sleeping areas, or share food with pets until you are fully recovered.</li> <li>•Keep possibly contaminated materials away from your pets or other animals, including linens, towels and clothing from a person with mpox. Wash such materials separately from other household laundry with soap and hot water (&lt;60°C), or soak in chlorine if hot water is not available.</li> <li>•Frequently clean potentially contaminated surfaces with household disinfectants to protect your pets or domestic animals.</li> </ul> <p>If your pet or animal develops symptoms or exhibits strange behaviour within 21 days (about 3 weeks) after coming in contact with you or any person who has mpox, contact your veterinarian immediately and test the animal for mpox, to confirm the case and rule out an alternate diagnosis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•If your animal or pet might have mpox, do not allow it to come into contact with other animals or people. Only allow authorized professionals with appropriate PPE (personal protective equipment), to attend to the animal until the animal has recovered completely.</li> </ul>