

How to talk to children about mpox

Tips for parents, teachers and community workers to protect children



Introduction for parents, and community health workers

What is mpox?

- * Explain that it is a virus which can spread between people, mainly through being in close contact with someone for a long time.
- * Mpox can also be spread by animals to people. At the moment it is best not to touch any animals, or if you must, wash your hands immediately afterwards.
- * Say that sometimes it can spread from objects and surfaces to people, if those things have been touched by someone with mpox. This includes sharing things like towels, clothes, or bed linen. If you have to share these things, make sure to wash them between use.
- * If you have mpox you might have a sore head, a fever, feel achy and sore, and get a rash on your skin.
- * It is normal to feel scared about catching a virus – no one likes to be sick! - but we can learn how to keep ourselves safe.
- * Anyone can get mpox. Viruses don't know the difference between people – viruses are just trying to spread as far as possible!

Tip 1: Don't Share Germs!

*Avoid sharing things like towels, utensils, or toys with other kids.

*If someone is sick, try to stay away from them and do not touch.

*It's okay to say 'no' to hugs or close play until they get better.

Tip 2: Keep Your Hands Clean!

* It's **always** good to wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after playing outside or using the bathroom and touching animals. If soap is not available, try to use ash.

Games ideas

- Be a Germ-Fighting Superhero! Remember the words that germs fear — soap and water. Washing your hands well and often is the best way to beat these tiny warriors.
- There is a right way to wash your hands. Use warm water and soap and rub your hands together for at least 15 seconds, which is about how long it takes to sing "Happy Birthday."

Tip 3: Know the Signs!

* Mpox can cause a rash that looks like pimples or blisters.

* It can also make you feel sick, like having a fever or a headache.

* If you see someone with a rash or feel sick, tell a grown-up and avoid touching or hugging them.

Tip 4: Stay Away When You're Sick!

* If you're not feeling well, try to stay home so you don't spread germs to others.

* It's important to see a health worker if you have symptoms. Ask a grown-up to help you get 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! Stay clean and take your medicine to get better quickly!

* 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.

Tip 5: Support your friends

* 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.

* Once the rash of someone who had mpox has scabbed over and they are out of the health centre, they are no longer infectious and ok to play and be at school again.

* An open communication and solidarity with your friends, neighbors and teachers will help fight the disease in your community

Tip 6: Don't Be Afraid to Ask Questions!

* If you have any questions about mpox, ask a grown-up.

* 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.

* Listen and follow the instructions from your parents and teachers! It's important to learn how to stay healthy and safe!

* 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.

By following these tips, you can help protect yourself and others from mpox!



"This material is developed by UNICEF for the use for public health and community engagements professionals. We recommend it to be tailored for each context."