Transmission

- Touching the blood, faeces, urine, vomit, spit, semen, or sores of infected animals (mainly monkeys, prairie dogs, rats and squirrels)
- Touching household items that are contaminated (for example, bedding)
- Through a bite or scratch by an infected animal
- Through preparing or eating infected bush meat that is not cooked thoroughly
- Breathing in droplets from a sick person (requires close, face-to-face contact for a long time)

Symptoms

- Fever, strong headache, swelling or painful lumps in neck, groin or underarms, back pain, muscle aches, feeling tired.
- A rash, usually starting on the face and then spreading to hands, feet and other parts of the body.

Prevention

- Avoid hunting or eating small bush mammals
- Avoid touching sick or dead animals and objects that might be contaminated by their stools
- Immediately quarantine animals that are potentially sick with monkeypox
- Avoid consuming uncooked meat
- Wash hands with soap after caring for or visiting sick people, and after handling or slaughtering sick animals
- Implement social mobilization and behaviour change communication

Vulnerable people

- Children and young adults.
- Hunters.

If an epidemic occurs

- Identify suspected monkeypox cases rapidly and refer them to health facilities
- Trace contacts and follow them up
- Increase social mobilization and behaviour change communication
- Give a pre-exposure smallpox vaccination to high-risk groups
- Avoid contact with persons infected by monkeypox
- Encourage people to wash hands with soap after caring for or visiting sick people, and after handling or slaughtering sick animals
- Use personal protective equipment (gloves, masks, clothing) when taking care of sick people
- Disinfect reusable supplies that are used to care for or treat sick people
- Encourage people not to hunt or eat small bush mammals
- Instruct people to avoid touching sick and dead animals and objects that might be contaminated by their faeces
- Instruct people not to consume uncooked meat

Community-based assessment - questions

Make a map of the community and mark the information you gather on the map. Record other details.

- When did people start to fall sick with monkeypox?
- How many people have fallen sick with monkeypox? Where?
- How many have died? Where?
- Who and where are the vulnerable people?
- Who is most affected by monkeypox?
- How many people live in the affected community or area? How many children under five years of age live in the area?
- Which people in the community have contact with monkeys and small animals and eat their meat? Are there bushmeat markets in the area?
- What are the community’s habits, practices and beliefs about handling and slaughtering animals, especially animals that are sick or dead?
- Do people cook bushmeat thoroughly before eating it?
- Are there handwashing facilities in the community, and at animal and bushmeat markets? Are soap and water always available?
- Where are the local health facilities and services? (Include traditional and community carers from whom people seek advice.)
- What are the community’s habits, practices and beliefs about caring for and feeding sick people?
- Is a social mobilization or health promotion programme in place?
- Which sources of information do people use most?
- Are rumours or is misinformation about monkeypox spreading in the community?

Volunteer actions

See the following action tools for more information on what actions to take against monkeypox:

1. Community-based surveillance
2. Community mapping
3. Communicating with the community
4. Referral to health facilities
5. Volunteer protection and safety
6. Using personal protection equipment (PPE) for highly infectious diseases
19. Psychosocial support (Psychological first aid (PFA))
20. Isolating sick people
26. Coughing etiquette
28. Social distancing
29. Hygiene promotion
31. Good food hygiene
34 - Handwashing with soap
35 - Handwashing in a highly infectious epidemic
39 - Preparing and using disinfectants
40 - Building an incinerator for medical waste
41 - Handling and slaughtering animals
43 - Social mobilization and behaviour change