



ASEAN BIODIASPORA VIRTUAL CENTER

DISEASE ALERT

With Support by:



Korea Disease Control and
Prevention Agency



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ASSOCIATION
OF SOUTHEAST
ASIAN NATIONS

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First alert: 23 August 2024 | **Mpox in Thailand**

SUB-LOCATIONS AFFECTED

Bangkok



Figure 1. Clinical symptom of Mpox. Source: <https://rnh.net.au/mpox-on-the-rise-2/>

Event Description

On August 22, 2024, Thailand's Department of Disease Control officially confirmed the first known imported case of the latest strain of mpox, specifically Clade 1b. This significant development marks the first instance of an imported mpox case in Asia and the second such detection of Clade I outside the African continent. The confirmation underscores the global spread of mpox and highlights the need for continued vigilance and public health measures to mitigate its impact.



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Current Information

- The patient is a 66-year-old European male who traveled from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and arrived in Bangkok on August 14, 2024.
- Following his arrival, the individual began exhibiting fever-like symptoms and other symptoms consistent with mpox and was promptly hospitalized and isolated.
- Laboratory tests confirmed the presence of the new mpox Clade Ib strain.
- Authorities tracked down around 43 patients who were sitting in the rows near the unidentified man, and those who met him after he landed. These people will be monitored for 21 days.
- On August 16, 2024, Thailand's National Institute of Health shared the full genome sequencing of this case through GISAID, indicating that the case is linked to mpox Clade Ib, which is driving the surge in Africa.
- This development comes after the confirmation of the first European case of mpox Clade Ib in Sweden just one day earlier.
- The genome sequencing from the two imported cases (Sweden and Thailand) shows a close relationship to cases from Uganda and Kenya.

Additional Information

- Asia has witnessed its first reported case of the mpox Clade Ib strain, prompting concerns about the potential spread within the region.
- Mpox cases and fatalities are escalating in Africa, with outbreaks documented in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda since July 2024.
- The new variant is known to spread more easily through routine close contact, including sexual activity.



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- The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared a global public health emergency (PHEIC) due to the concerning outbreaks in the DRC and neighboring regions. This declaration necessitates international cooperation to ensure effective vaccine distribution with sufficient supplies, although this process is expected to take several months.

Public Health Measures Implemented in Thailand

- Health authorities are tracking 43 close contacts, none of whom have exhibited symptoms thus far. The monitoring will persist for 21 days.
- Preventive measures are being implemented due to the ongoing outbreaks in multiple African countries including the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Kenya, and Côte d'Ivoire, all of which are also yellow fever endemic areas (except for Rwanda).
- In a precautionary move, health officials in Thailand have announced that travelers returning from unspecified 42 high-risk countries must now register and undergo testing upon arrival. They are required to register through the Thai Health Pass system (<https://thaihealthpass.com/>) before traveling, and are required to undergo screening by the International Disease Control Port and Quarantine officers. Arriving passengers traveling from the six countries will undergo body temperature checks, symptom assessment, and skin examination for rashes. If symptoms consistent with Mpox are detected, the travelers will be isolated, have their medical history taken, undergo further physical examinations, and will have samples collected for laboratory testing by the Laboratory of the International Disease Control Port and Quarantine. Patients who have been confirmed with positive tests will be referred to Bamrasnaradura Infectious Diseases Institute.



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- Those who are planning to travel to African countries should be aware if the destination country is experiencing an outbreak and take precautions to avoid close contact with others. In case of any symptoms such as fever, sore throat, headache, muscle aches, back pain, or appearance of a rash with clear or pustular blisters on the skin, it is important to monitor their health and seek medical attention.
- The Department of Disease Control is closely monitoring the situation of Mpox as well as other emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases, particularly new strains that may be encountered among people coming from abroad. It is possible for those travelers to exhibit suspected symptoms or transmit the disease.
- The Department of Disease Control emphasizes the following measures for mpox prevention:
 - Avoid crowded or densely populated areas, avoid close contact with others, and people should regularly clean shared surfaces;
 - Wash hands frequently with soap or alcohol-based hand sanitizer, and avoid sharing personal items with others;
 - Individuals with suspected symptoms can request testing at any nearby healthcare facility. For further inquiries, contact the Department of Disease Control Hotline at 1422.

Africa Contextual Highlights

- The mpox outbreak in Africa is multifaceted and evolving, involving clades Ia, Ib, and IIb.
- The primary mode of transmission for the new Mpox Clade Ib in the densely populated south Kivu region of the DRC is sexual contact, which has also spread to neighboring countries.
- Recurring animal-to-human transmissions of the older Clade Ia continue to occur in endemic areas of the DRC, further complicating the situation.



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Mpox Control Measures In Other Countries

The spread of the new clade 1 variant has caused concern among some countries, particularly in Asia where measures have been ramped up. While there are no travel restrictions currently in place, governments in different countries are taking measures to protect travellers.

- **India:** the government has directed airports, ports, and border authorities to stay vigilant while some hospitals have facilities for isolating suspected mpox cases.
- **Indonesia:** Introduced health screening for foreign travellers who must complete forms disclosing medical history and recent travel activities.
- **China:** Enhance airport surveillance to isolate and test affected travellers and those with symptoms must report their condition on entry.
- **South Africa and Kenya:** Introduced testing procedures for travellers entering the country to identify mpox cases and prevent their spread.
- **Nigeria:** Implement a declaration process for travellers heading to specific regions in Africa.
- **Pakistan:** Prepare hospital wards for a potential mpox outbreak following the detection of a case there and introduced screening at airports following the discovery of a case in the country.
- **South Korea:** Monitor passengers from high-risk countries, which includes Ethiopia, Kenya and the Democratic Republic of Congo.
- **China Taipei:** Start to stockpile vaccines and has launched immunisation programmes for high-risk groups.
- Border controls across various Asian countries have been ramped up after a suspected case of the clade 1 variant was found in Thailand.



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