

NOTIFIABLE MEDICAL CONDITIONS (NMC) CASE DEFINITIONS FLIPCHART

Category 1: Immediate reporting telephonically followed by written or electronic notification within 24hrs of diagnosing a case

SMALLPOX

Why is surveillance necessary?	Who must notify and when?	Suspected case definition	Probable case definition	Confirmed case definition
<p>Smallpox is an acute contagious disease caused by the variola virus, a member of the orthopoxvirus family. It was declared eradicated in 1980 following a global immunization campaign led by the World Health Organization.</p>	<p>The healthcare practitioner who makes the diagnosis should notify the case</p>	<p>A person with acute onset of fever $\geq 38.3^{\circ}\text{C}$ and malaise, and severe prostration with headache and backache occurring 2 to 4 days before rash onset AND subsequent development of a maculopapular rash starting on the face and forearms, then spreading to the trunk and legs, and evolving within 48 hours to deep-seated, firm/hard and round well-circumscribed vesicles and later pustules, which may become umbilicated or confluent AND lesions that appear in the same stage of development (i.e. all are vesicles or all are pustules) on any given part of the body (e.g. the face or arm) AND no alternative diagnosis explaining the illness.</p>	<p>A probable case is a suspected case with either laboratory evidence by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detection of a poxvirus resembling variola virus by electron microscopy; OR • Isolation of variola virus pending confirmation; OR • Detection of variola virus by nucleic acid testing pending confirmation); ORF • epidemiological linked to confirmed case). 	<p>A confirmed case is a person with laboratory evidence of smallpox virus infection by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isolation of variola virus and PCR confirmation of cultured isolate; OR • Detection of variola virus by PCR).
<p>Additional notes In the past, smallpox was sometimes confused with chickenpox, caused by varicella zoster virus. Chickenpox can be distinguished from smallpox by its much more superficial lesions, their presence more on the trunk than on the face and extremities, and by the development of successive crops of lesions in the same area.</p>				
<p>Additional resources Smallpox is not likely every to occur in South Africa, but should clinicians be concerned, they should contact the NICD 24-hour hotline (082-883-9920) for assistance with the diagnosis.</p>				