

## Mpox (monkeypox virus)- Factsheet

### What is mpox (monkeypox virus)?

Mpox is a rare disease caused by infection with the mpox virus. Mpox virus is part of the same family of viruses as variola virus, the virus that causes smallpox. Mpox symptoms are similar to smallpox symptoms, but milder, and mpox is rarely fatal.

### What are the symptoms of mpox?

Symptoms of mpox can include:

- Fever
- Headache
- Muscle aches and backache
- Swollen lymph nodes
- Chills
- Exhaustion
- A rash that can look like pimples or blisters that appears on the face, inside the mouth, and on other parts of the body like the hands, feet, chest, genitals, or anus.
  - The rash goes through different stages before healing completely. The illness typically lasts 2-4 weeks.

The first symptoms usually begin within 3-17 days after exposure but can take up to 21 days to be observed. Most cases develop a characteristic rash first followed by other symptoms but sometimes people only experience a rash. The rash usually appears within 14 days of exposure.

### How is mpox spread?

Mpox can spread from person to person through direct contact with the infectious rash, scabs, or body fluids. It also can be spread by respiratory secretions during prolonged, face-to-face contact, or during intimate physical contact, such as kissing, cuddling, or sex. The virus that causes mpox can spread through contact with objects, fabrics, and surfaces that have not been disinfected after use by someone with mpox. This includes items like clothing, bedding, towels, dishes, utensils, fetish gear, or sex toys.

### How long are people contagious?

People are contagious from 4 days before symptom onset until the rash has fully healed and a fresh layer of skin has formed. Typically, 2-4 weeks.

### Who gets mpox?

People are at a higher risk of contracting mpox if they have had recent travel to areas where mpox is endemic (i.e., west Africa), or direct contact with mpox lesions, saliva, or upper respiratory secretions of infected persons or animals. In the 2022 outbreak, mpox was almost exclusively associated with sexual contact among men who have sex with men.

### What treatment is available for people with mpox?

There are no treatments specifically for mpox virus infections. However, because of genetic similarities in the viruses, antiviral drugs used to treat smallpox may be used to treat severe mpox infections.

### Do infected people need to be kept home from school, work or daycare?

People should stay home from work, school, daycare, or other settings where others could be exposed until the rash has fully healed and a fresh layer of skin has formed.

### How can I protect myself and my family from getting mpox?

- Vaccination is recommended for people who have been exposed to mpox or people who may be more likely to get mpox, including:
  - People who have been identified by public health officials as a contact of someone with mpox.
  - People who know one of their sexual partners in the past 2 weeks have been diagnosed with mpox.
  - People who had multiple sexual partners in the past 2 weeks in an area with known mpox.
  - You are a gay, bisexual, or other man who has sex with men (MSM), or a person who has sex with gay, bisexual, or other MSM who in the past 6 months has had any of the following:
    - A new diagnosis of one or more sexually transmitted diseases (e.g., chlamydia, gonorrhea, or syphilis)
    - More than one sex partner
  - You have had any of the following in the past 6 months:
    - Sex at a commercial sex venue (like a sex club or bathhouse)
    - Sex related to a large commercial event or in a geographic area (city or county for example) where mpox virus transmission is occurring
  - You have a sex partner with any of the above risks
  - You anticipate experiencing any of the above scenarios
- Avoid close, skin-to-skin contact with people who have a rash that looks like mpox.
- Avoid contact with objects and materials that a person with mpox has used.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, especially before eating or touching your face and after you use the bathroom.

If you think you may be eligible for vaccination, contact a healthcare provider or your local health department. They can help you determine if you should get vaccinated.