



## **What is mpox?**

Mpox is a rare illness caused by infection with the mpox virus. It usually begins with flu-like symptoms and swelling of the lymph nodes. A rash on the face or body can appear a few days later.

Since May 2022, multiple mpox cases have been found in countries that don't normally have them, including the United States. Cases appear to be spreading through close contact among individuals within sexual and social networks and have been observed among men who have sex with men.

## **How is mpox spread?**

Mpox can spread to anyone through close, often skin-to-skin contact including:

- Direct contact with mpox rash, sores, or scabs.
- Sexual contact of any kind or touching the genitals or anus of a person with mpox.
- Hugging, massaging, kissing.
- Talking closely through respiratory droplets or oral fluids from a person with mpox.
- Contact with objects such as clothing, bedding, sex toys, or towels.
- Surfaces used by someone with mpox.

A person with mpox is considered infectious from the beginning of symptoms. They can stay that way until sores have crusted, scabbed over, fallen off, and a fresh layer of healthy skin has formed underneath. This can often take several weeks.

## **What are the symptoms of mpox?**

Symptoms typically start with:

- Fever
- Headache
- Muscle aches
- Backache
- Swollen lymph nodes
- General feeling of discomfort and exhaustion.

Within 1 to 3 days (sometimes longer) after the start of a fever, a rash can begin that looks like raised bumps, pimples, or fluid-filled sores. The rash can be painful and sores can vary from a few to many. They often first appear on the face, but sometimes around the genitals or anus, and can be confused with syphilis, herpes, and other sexually transmitted infections. Eventually, the bumps get crusty, scab over and fall off. Most people fully recover after 2-4 weeks.

## **Is there treatment for mpox?**

There is no approved treatment for mpox. However, smallpox vaccines and antiviral treatments can be used to prevent and treat infection.

## **What is being done to prevent the spread of this disease?**

Our priority is to raise awareness of mpox among our residents, communities, and healthcare partners. This is important because:

1. Infected people can notice their symptoms early, stay away from others, and seek care from a healthcare provider.
2. Public health authorities and medical providers can identify cases early and notify close contacts so they can be vaccinated to prevent infection.
3. Individuals can learn how to protect themselves from getting infected.

## **What can people do to protect themselves and others from getting infected with mpox?**

- Avoid physical and sexual contact with anyone who has a new rash or sores or who feels ill.
- Talk to your partners about recent illness
- Be aware of new or unexplained sores or rashes on your body or your partner's body, including the genitals and anus.
- Avoid touching any rashes or sores on others
- Minimize skin-to-skin contact, especially if you are attending raves, parties, or large events.

If you feel sick, have a new rash, or think you may have a mpox infection:

- Stay home, stay away from others, and seek a doctor immediately.
- Avoid sex and intimacy until a doctor has checked you out.
  - Remind your doctor that this virus is circulating in the area.
- Avoid gatherings, especially if there will be close or skin-to-skin contact.
- Think about your close or sexual contacts within the last 21 days, including people you met through dating apps.
  - You might be asked to share this information to help stop the spread.

If you or someone you live with, have sex with, or are in contact with have mpox, the best way to protect yourself and others is to:

- Avoid sex of any kind.
- Do not kiss or touch each other's bodies while you are sick, especially any rash or sores.
- Do not share things like towels, fetish gear, sex toys, and toothbrushes.

If you are caring for someone with mpox, taking these steps may help protect you from the virus:

- Wear a mask and gloves when you are close to them or touching their bedding, clothing, or linens.
- Regularly wash your hands
- Practice physical distancing when possible.

If you or your partner have (or think you might have) mpox and decide to have sex, the following can lower the chance of spreading the virus:

- Have virtual sex with no in-person contact.
- Masturbate together at a distance of at least 6 feet.

- Have sex with your clothes on, or cover areas where there are rash or sores, to avoid skin-to-skin contact.
- Avoid kissing.
- Wash your hands, fetish gear, sex toys and any fabrics (bedding, towels, clothing) after having sex.
- Limit your partners to avoid chances for mpox to spread.

People who work in healthcare, such as providers and support staff who may be in contact with people with mpox and their linens or items, should wear personal protective equipment to avoid exposure. They should also regularly wash their hands and use gowns, gloves, N95 or higher respirators, and eye protection.