

Information for people with mpox

What are the symptoms of mpox?

Symptoms normally begin 3-21 days after exposure to the virus.

Some people get early symptoms such as:

- fever or chills
- headache
- muscle aches and backache
- tiredness
- swollen lymph nodes.

Usual symptoms include:

- rashes, pimple-like lesions or sores, particularly in areas that are hard to see such as the genitals, anus or buttocks
- ulcers, lesions or sore in the mouth
- rectal pain (pain in or around the anus), which may occur without a rash.

People who are already vaccinated against mpox may only have very mild symptoms, such as a single lesion (sore).

People with mpox infection may be infectious up to 4 days before symptoms start. People with mpox are infectious until:

- all the lesions (sores) have crusted
- scabs have fallen off and a fresh layer of skin has formed underneath
- any rectal pain is completely gone.

Most people with mpox get better within a few weeks without needing any specific treatment.

How does mpox spread?

Mpox in Australia is mainly spreading through sexual activity. Mpox spreads by:

- direct skin to skin contact with rashes, blisters or sores
- contact with semen and other body fluids from a person with mpox.

Mpox may also spread by:

- touching contaminated objects, such as bedding or clothes, or

- extended face to face contact with a person with mpox, but this is rare.

What happens if I have mpox?

If you have tested positive for mpox, someone from your local public health unit (PHU) or sexual health clinic will contact you to provide advice and understand if anyone else is at risk. With your permission, the PHU will follow-up with your close contacts (the PHU can help tell people anonymously). In some circumstances, close contacts can be offered vaccination to prevent them getting mpox.

You may be asked to change some of your daily activities to reduce the risk of spreading mpox to other people. Occasionally, the PHU may ask you to stay home and isolate from other people if there is a higher risk of spreading mpox.

Most people can manage mpox symptoms themselves by staying hydrated and taking over-the-counter pain medication (e.g. paracetamol, ibuprofen).

Your doctor may recommend pain relief tablets or creams, wound care, stool softeners, and occasionally medication to treat mpox.

If your symptoms get worse speak with your doctor, [healthdirect](https://www.healthdirect.gov.au) (1800 022 222), or in an emergency, call Triple Zero (000) straight away and say you have mpox.

How do I protect other people?

If you have mpox you should:

- not have sex or intimate contact with others
- cover lesions or sores with clothing or with a bandage
- wash your hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based sanitiser regularly, and after touching lesions or sores
- cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your elbow
- wear a surgical mask around other people if you have sores or pain in your mouth or throat, or respiratory symptoms
- avoid physical contact with other people, particularly people at higher risk of infection (young children, older people, people with weak immune systems, and people who are pregnant)
- sleep in a separate room and use your own bathroom at home (if possible), and limit close physical contact with household members
- not share clothing, bedding or towels, and do your own laundry
- not attend childcare or aged care facilities without first discussing with the doctor or nurse from the PHU
- only attend healthcare settings if you need to see a doctor (and wear a mask if you do attend)
- avoid touching your face or rubbing your eyes, especially if you have lesions or sores near your eyes or on your hands
- tell your recent sexual partners they may have been exposed to mpox (the doctor or nurse at the PHU can help tell people anonymously if preferred).

How do I know I am no longer infectious?

Your doctor will tell you when you are no longer infectious.

Once all your symptoms have gone you are not likely to be infectious. You are infectious until:

- all lesions have crusted
- scabs have fallen off and a fresh layer of skin has formed underneath
- any rectal pain (pain in or around the anus) has completely gone.

After this, you can go back to your normal activities, but you should:

- use condoms for any sexual activity for 12 weeks after symptoms have gone away
- not donate blood, cells, tissue, breast milk, semen or organs for 12 weeks
- thoroughly clean and disinfect your home. This is particularly important if you had scabs that may have fallen off in the home. For advice on how to clean and disinfect your home, visit the [Clinical Excellence Commission website](#).

What other support is available?

Support is available though:

- [ACON's support services](#) – Offers a range of free and affordable counselling services for LGBTQ+ adults in NSW – (02) 9206 2000
- [QLife](#) – A national and anonymous phone and online counselling service staffed by LGBTQ+ community members – 1800 184 527
- [NSW Mental Health Line](#) – 1800 011 511
- [Beyond Blue](#) – 1800 512 348
- [Lifeline](#) – 13 11 14

Should I get a mpox vaccination if I have had mpox?

If you have had mpox, you do not need to get a mpox vaccine. However, you should still protect yourself so you do not get mpox again. Learn more about how to stay safe in the [mpox fact sheet](#).

Further information

Visit the [NSW Health mpox information hub](#) for further information. You can also call your local PHU on 1300 066 055.

In an emergency, call Triple Zero (000) straight away.

For free help in your language, call the Translating and Interpreting Service on 13 14 50.