

Mpox

Fact sheet

What is mpox?

Mpox is an infection caused by monkeypox virus. Since May 2022, there has been a global increase in mpox, including in Australia.

Infection mostly happens from direct skin to skin or sexual activity. People at highest risk of mpox in NSW are men who have sex with men.

Since January 2023, there has been an outbreak of a more severe strain of mpox in central and eastern Africa.

What are the symptoms of mpox?

Symptoms usually begin 3-21 days after exposure.

Some people get early symptoms such as:

- fever or chills
- headache
- muscle aches and back ache
- 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 sores in the mouth
- rectal pain (pain in and around the anus), which may occur without a rash.

People with mpox 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.

How do I protect myself from mpox?

There is a [vaccine](#) to protect against mpox called JYNNEOS. Find out who should be vaccinated and how to book your vaccination [here](#).

Other ways to protect yourself from mpox:

- exchanging contact information with sexual partners. This means that if a partner develops mpox you can be contacted and offered vaccination to prevent mpox ([post-exposure preventative vaccination](#))
- avoiding close contact with people who have mpox or mpox symptoms
- avoiding contact with infected materials, such as bedding or towels from a person with mpox
- practicing good hand hygiene.

For information on protecting yourself from mpox when travelling overseas, see [Mpox: Information for overseas travellers](#).

How is mpox diagnosed and treated?

Mpox is diagnosed by swabs taken from affected areas.

Most people with mpox can manage symptoms at home by staying hydrated and taking over-the-counter pain medicines. If you get mpox, your doctor will monitor your symptoms.

People who get really sick may need to go to hospital. They may be given medicine to control fever or pain, or antiviral medicines.

Further information

Call your doctor or local sexual health clinic right away if you think you might have mpox symptoms.

If you have questions about mpox, call the NSW Sexual Health Infolink on 1800 451 624.

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.