

Mpox

What is Mpox?

Mpox is a rare disease caused by the mpox virus.

There are two types of mpox virus: West African and Congo Basin. Infections in the U.S. outbreak are from the West African type. Although this type rarely causes death, people might have permanent scarring from the rash.

Mpox is part of the same family of viruses that causes smallpox. The smallpox vaccine helped protect people against the mpox virus.

After the World Health Organization declared mpox eradicated (wiped out) in 1980, the vaccine was no longer given.

In May 2022 an outbreak of mpox spread across several countries that don't normally report mpox, including the United States.

Who can Get Mpox?

You can get mpox if you have close contact with a person who has it. You are more at risk for getting sick if you:

- have a weakened immune system (from having chemotherapy to treat cancer or taking immunosuppressive medicines for an organ transplant)
- are pregnant or breastfeeding
- have skin conditions such as eczema or psoriasis.

Children younger than 8 years old are also at risk. Currently, this outbreak is largely affecting gay, bisexual, or other men who have sex with men.



Credits: NHS England High Consequence Infectious Diseases Network
(Centers for Disease Control & Prevention website)

How is Mpox Spread?

The virus can be spread 3 ways by:

- direct contact:
 - with body fluids or skin lesions (from the mpox rash)
 - through respiratory droplets breathed in during extended intimate contact (kissing, face-to-face contact or sex)
 - from pregnant people to their fetuses
- touching items that were used by an infected person (such as clothing, bedding or towels)
- a bite or scratch from an infected animal:

What are the Symptoms of Mpox?

Symptoms of mpox include:

- rash that looks like pimples or blisters that appears on the face, inside the mouth, and on other parts of the body such as the hands, feet, chest, genitals or anus
 - The rash goes through different stages before fully healing.
 - It starts as a flat rash then changes to raised bumps filled with fluid.
 - The rash then crusts over and scabs develop.

(over)

- fever or chills
- headache
- body and muscle aches
- fatigue (feeling exhausted)
- sore throat, cough, nasal congestion
- swollen lymph nodes.

How Long Can Mpox be Spread?

Mpox can spread from the time symptoms start until the rash has fully healed and a new layer of skin has formed.

Symptoms usually appear 1 to 2 weeks after infection. The illness typically lasts 2 to 4 weeks.

People who do not have mpox symptoms cannot spread the virus to others.

How is Mpox Confirmed?

Call your health care provider if you think you have mpox or if you have close contact with someone who has mpox.

Your health care provider will decide if you should be tested. They will swab your skin lesions or the inside of your mouth.

The samples will be sent to a lab for testing. Your health care provider will contact you with the results.

Contact your health care provider if you have any questions or concerns.

Can Mpox be Treated?

There are no treatments specifically for mpox virus infections. There are antiviral medicines used to treat smallpox that may be used to treat mpox infections.

Your health care provider will decide what is right for you.

Is There a Vaccine for Mpox?

Vaccines that were developed to protect against smallpox viruses may be used to prevent mpox infections.

Vaccines may be recommended for:

- people who have had or may have contact with someone who has mpox
- health care and public health workers who may be exposed to the virus.

The vaccine is currently for people 18 years and older who do not have symptoms of mpox infection.

If you think you may be eligible for a vaccine, contact:

- your health care provider
- Minnesota Department of Health
 - health.state.mn.us/diseases/monkeypox/vaccine.html
- Wisconsin Department of Health & Services
 - dhs.wisconsin.gov/mpox/vaccine.htm.

How Can You Help Prevent Getting or Spreading Mpox?

- Avoid close, skin-to-skin contact with people who have a rash that looks like mpox.
- Do not touch the rash or scabs of a person with mpox.
- Do not kiss, hug, cuddle or have any type of direct sexual contact with someone with mpox.
- Avoid contact with objects and materials that a person with mpox has used.
 - Do not share eating utensils or cups with a person with mpox.
 - Do not handle or touch the bedding, towels, or clothing of a person with mpox.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, especially before eating, touching your face, and after you use the bathroom.

Information adapted by the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, the Minnesota Department of Health, and the World Health Organization.