



Mpox

(Monkeypox)

What is mpox?

Mpox (formerly known as monkeypox) is a viral infection caused by the mpox virus. Mpox often appears with a rash that may be painful. Most people recover on their own after a few weeks. However, in some circumstances people can become very ill.

What are the symptoms?

People usually develop symptoms 7 to 10 days after being exposed to the mpox virus. However, the time it takes to develop symptoms can range from 3 to 21 days after being exposed. The rash can be painful and could affect any part of the body, such as the face and mouth, arms and legs, hands and feet, anus, rectum, and genitals.

The rash usually lasts between 2 to 4 weeks and changes through different stages. It finally forms scabs that later fall off. The rash can be accompanied by general symptoms such as: fever, chills, headache, exhaustion, swollen lymph nodes, back, joint and muscle pain. Sometimes people may not notice that they have a rash but may have a sore throat or rectal pain.

People are contagious from the onset of first symptoms until the scabs have fallen off on their own and the skin is healed.

How is mpox spread?

Mpox can be passed from person-to-person through contact with the lesions or scabs of a person who has mpox. These lesions or scabs may be found on the skin or mucosal surfaces (such as the eyes, mouth, throat, genitals, anus, or rectum).

It may also be possible for it to be passed through:

Contact with bodily fluids, such as blood, saliva, and semen.

Sexual activity, including oral and skin-to-skin contact.

Direct contact with personal items that a person who has mpox uses, such as sex toys, clothing, bedding, towels, and toothbrushes.

Respiratory particles from talking, breathing, coughing, or sneezing, during close contact.

There is also a chance that people who are pregnant and have mpox can pass the virus to their fetus through the placenta.

A-Z DISEASE FACT SHEETS

How is mpox diagnosed?

Mpox is diagnosed by swabbing a lesion for laboratory testing. Mpox may present with concurrent sexually transmissible and blood-borne infections (STBBIs). You may be advised to get tested for mpox based on specific risk factors such as exposure to a case, symptoms, or travel history to a country experiencing an outbreak.

Who is at risk of mpox infection?

Anyone can get and spread mpox if they come into close contact with someone who has the virus. Person-to-person transmission is currently happening in Canada. Having multiple sexual partners may increase your overall risk of infection. However, it is important to stress that the risk of exposure to the mpox virus is not limited to any group or setting.

How can mpox be prevented?

You can help lower your risk of getting mpox by avoiding close physical (including sexual) contact with someone who has mpox, and sexual contact with someone who may have had a high-risk exposure to mpox. This includes: a sexual partner or household member of someone with mpox and contact with personal items or objects used by someone with mpox.

You can also lower your risk by getting vaccinated against mpox, if [eligible](#). Having fewer sexual partners, using barrier protection during sexual activity, including condoms, dental dams, gloves, clothing, and practising regular hand hygiene

How is mpox treated?

There is no specific cure for mpox, and treatment is supportive.

What is the public health response?

Contact your local public health authority if you may have been exposed to someone with mpox. Your local public health authority may also notify you if you have been exposed. They will ask questions and provide you with instructions on what to do, which may vary depending on your exposure risk level.

Further Information

For additional information, contact your health-care provider, **local Public Health office** or **Tele-Care 811**.

A-Z DISEASE FACT SHEETS

USEFUL WEBSITES

[Mpox \(gnb.ca\)](https://gnb.ca)

Immunize Canada [Home | immunizecanada](https://immunizecanada.ca)

Public Health Agency of Canada [Public Health Agency of Canada \(PHAC\)](https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/)

Last reviewed August 22, 2024