

Mpox: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

An outbreak of Mpox is occurring in many countries:

- WHO has declared a public health emergency of international concern.
- Mpox is preventable. Most people recover fully, but some people can get seriously ill
- Symptoms can be uncomfortable and painful
- While Mpox can affect anyone, most cases in this outbreak are among men who have sex with men
- What we know about the outbreak is changing fast - we are learning more every day

Symptoms of Mpox often include:

- Rash on face, hands, feet, body, perianal area or genitals
- Rash in mouth, throat, eyes, vagina and anus
- Fever
- Swollen lymph nodes
- Headaches
- Muscle and back aches
- Low energy
- Painful swelling inside your rectum (proctitis)
- Pain or difficulty when urinating

You can catch Mpox through close contact with someone who has symptoms including:

- Skin-to-skin (e.g., touching, anal and vaginal sex)
- Face-to-face (e.g., talking, singing, breathing)
- Mouth-to-skin (e.g., oral sex)
- Mouth-to-mouth (e.g., kissing)
- From contaminated bedding, towels, clothing, surfaces or objects

Protect yourself from Mpox:

- If someone you know is diagnosed with or has suspected Mpox, avoid close contact with them
- Know the symptoms and check yourself regularly
- If you have symptoms, seek health advice and self-isolate while you wait to get tested
- Get vaccinated if it is available to you
- Follow advice to reduce the risk of infection if you live with someone who has Mpox

Mpox can spread through sex:

- People who have sex with multiple or new partners are most at risk
- Check yourself regularly for symptoms and ask partners to do the same
- If Mpox is impacting your community, you can reduce your risk by reducing your number of sexual partners, waiting for a while before having sex with any new partners or taking a break from sex
- Have open, non-judgmental conversations. Swap contact details with sexual partners and agree to let each other know if you develop symptoms
- Condoms will prevent some STIs. They may also reduce your risk of exposure to Mpox, but they will not prevent you becoming infected through close physical contact

If you think you have Mpox:

- Get advice from a health worker
- Get tested
- Isolate at home if your health worker recommends you do so
- Take care of your rash, physical and mental health
- Protect others by avoiding close contact with them
- If you are sharing a house with others while isolating, stay in separate rooms, frequently clean hands, clean/disinfect objects and surfaces often and open windows
- Avoid contact with your pets

Stigmatising people because of a disease is never ok.

Anyone can get or pass on Mpox.
Together, we can end this outbreak.

Getting tested for Mpox: What you need to know

When to seek testing:

1 If you are experiencing symptoms consistent with Mpox, including an unexplained skin rash, rash inside your mouth or genital area, lesions, or swollen lymph nodes.

Or

2 If you are a close contact of someone who has Mpox. Close contact can mean being face-to-face (such as talking); skin-to-skin (such as touching or vaginal/anal sex); mouth-to-mouth (such as kissing); or mouth-to-skin contact (such as oral sex).

and

You are experiencing symptoms such as fever (>38.5°C), headache, myalgia (muscle pain/body aches), back pain, profound weakness or fatigue.



If you don't have symptoms but think you have been exposed talk to your health care provider for more information

Testing is one vital tool in helping end the outbreak. Knowing if you have the virus can help you protect others in your community. It means that you can get appropriate medical care including pain management and management of infection and can also help facilitate access to social support and counselling if you need it.

Testing- step-by-step:

1. You will be placed in a private room in your health care facility and your health care provider will be wearing appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) for sample collection.



2. A sample will be collected by swabbing your lesions and surrounding skin (lesion material is the best sample type and most likely to give an accurate test result). Your health care provider may swab more than one of your lesions. If you do not have lesions other sample types might be collected, including a swab from the back of your throat (oropharyngeal swab) or from your genital and anal area (genital, anal and rectal swabs).



3. Your health care provider will then send your sample to a laboratory where it will be tested for the monkeypox virus. Other possible causes of your lesions may be tested for. Currently the only reliable test is lab-based.



4. Depending on your local context the lab will either contact you directly or the results will be returned to your health care provider.



5. If you receive a positive result: your health care provider can advise you on recovering in a facility or at home and help refer you to the relevant local services including medical support, social support and counselling.



6. If you receive a negative result: your health care provider may advise you to monitor your symptoms and get retested.



What to do while I wait for my test results:

- Self-isolate if you can and avoid close contact with other people, cover all your lesions with fabric/clothing and wear a well-fitted mask.
- Follow the guidance from your health care provider.
- Practice hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette (covering your nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing).



What happens with my results?

- Have an open conversation with a trusted health worker if you have any concerns about how your personal information is managed during the testing process.
- Results should only be communicated with you, confidentially.
- You can choose to tell who you want, but you should inform people who you have had close contact with so they can be aware and get tested too.



Here are some great tools to help you:

Stay safe by taking some simple precautions!



Information about Mpox is evolving rapidly. Advice may change as we learn more. Check www.who.int for the most up-to-date information.