

## **Mpox (formerly known as monkeypox)**

MCLA Health Services is committed to informing the MCLA community about health issues that may affect them. We recognize that there is risk for stigma or discrimination when communicating about a new disease outbreak. We all have a responsibility to reject any stigmatizing words or actions related to Mpox (hMPXV) virus and instead, share accurate information so that people can make the best decisions for their health and the health of our community. Mpox is not a sexually transmitted disease as it can be transmitted by any direct physical contact between someone's rash, scabs, bodily fluids, and another person. This contact can include sexual activity and any touching of the lesions/rash or even touching of clothing or bedding that an infected person used.

### **What is Mpox?**

- Mpox is a rare disease caused by infection with the Mpox virus. Mpox virus is part of the same family of viruses as variola virus, the virus that causes smallpox. Mpox symptoms are similar to smallpox symptoms, but milder, and Mpox is rarely fatal. Mpox is not related to chickenpox.
- Mpox was discovered in 1958 when two outbreaks of a pox-like disease occurred in colonies of monkeys kept for research. Despite being named "monkeypox," the source of the disease remains unknown. However, African rodents and non-human primates (like monkeys) might harbor the virus and infect people.
- The first human case of Mpox was recorded in 1970. Before the 2022 outbreak, Mpox had been reported in people in several central and western African countries. Previously, almost all Mpox cases in people outside of Africa were linked to international travel to countries where the disease commonly occurs or through imported animals. These cases occurred on multiple continents.
- There are two types of Mpox virus: Clade I and Clade II. The Clade I type of Mpox virus has a fatality rate around 10%.
- Infections in the current outbreak are from Clade II, or more specifically, Clade IIb.
- Infections with Clade IIb are rarely fatal. More than 99% of people who get this form of the disease are likely to survive. However, people with severely weakened immune systems, children younger than 1 year of age, people with a history of eczema, and people who are pregnant or breastfeeding may be more likely to get seriously ill or die.

### **Mpox symptoms**

People with Mpox often get a rash that may be located on hands, feet, chest, face, or mouth or near the genitals, including penis, testicles, labia, and vagina, and anus. The incubation period is 3-17 days. During this time, a person does not have symptoms and may feel fine.

- The rash will go through several stages, including scabs, before healing.
- The rash can initially look like pimples or blisters and may be painful or itchy.

Other symptoms of Mpox can include:

- Fever
- Chills
- Swollen lymph nodes
- Exhaustion
- Muscle aches and backache
- Headache
- Respiratory symptoms (e.g., sore throat, nasal congestion, or cough)

You may experience all or only a few symptoms. Watch for symptoms of Mpox for 21 days from the date of your last exposure. If you have symptoms, such as a rash, visit a healthcare provider.

### **How long do Mpox symptoms last?**

- Mpox symptoms usually start within 3 weeks of exposure to the virus. If someone has flu-like symptoms, they will usually develop a rash 1-4 days later.
- A person with Mpox can spread it to others from the time symptoms start until the rash has fully healed and a fresh layer of skin has formed.
- New data show that some people can spread Mpox to others from one to four days before their symptoms appear. It's not clear how many people this has affected during the current outbreak. There is currently no evidence showing that people who never develop symptoms have spread the virus to someone else.

### **How is Mpox spread?**

Mpox is spread through:

- Direct contact with an infectious rash, scabs, or body fluids.
- Respiratory secretions during prolonged, face-to-face contact, or during intimate physical contact, such as kissing, cuddling, or sex.
- Touching objects, fabrics (such as clothing or linens) that previously touched the rash or body fluids of someone with Mpox.
- Being scratched or bitten by an infected animal.
- Mpox can be acquired by all people, regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation.
- Mpox causes a rash.
- Mpox can spread from the time symptoms start until the rash has fully healed and a fresh layer of skin has formed. This can take several weeks.

### **What to do if you are a close contact.**

- If you have been informed that you are a close contact of a person with Mpox, it's important to take steps to protect your health and the health of others.

[If You're a Close Contact | Mpox | Poxvirus | CDC](#)

## What to do if you think you have Mpox?

- Seek medical care and avoid close physical contact and gatherings, including sex with others until you know for sure. Wear a mask and cover your rash when you need to go out for medical appointments. Talk to your partners about any recent illnesses or rashes they might have.
- If you have a rash and think you might be at risk for Mpox due to an exposure or high-risk activities call MCLA Health Services at (413) 662-5421. Make sure to wear a mask and to cover any lesions you have with clothing and let staff know as soon as possible why you are there.

## When to Get Tested

- Currently, testing is only recommended if you have a rash consistent with [Mpox](#).
- If you think you have Mpox or have had close personal contact with someone who has Mpox, consider [taking precautions](#) and visit a healthcare provider to help you decide if you need to be tested for Mpox.

## Where to Get Tested

- Only a healthcare provider can order an Mpox test. The healthcare provider may take a specimen and send it to a lab for testing or they may send you to a lab for both specimen collection and testing.
- Contact your local health department with any questions and to find out what the testing options are for your community.

## What to Expect When You Get Tested

- You will need to fill out paperwork before you get tested.
- To get a specimen to test, the healthcare provider will use a swab to rub vigorously across lesions of your rash. They will take swabs from more than one lesion.
- This swabbing may be uncomfortable but is necessary to get enough material to detect the Mpox virus from the specimens.
- The specimens will be tested in a lab to see if the Mpox virus is detected.
- Results are generally available within a few days.
- While you are waiting for your results, [take precautions](#) to avoid getting or spreading Mpox virus to others.

## How can you reduce your risk and prevent spread?

- Avoid close contact (including sexual contact) with people who are sick or have a rash and their household/contaminated items.
- Decrease the number of sex and intimate contact partners.
- Avoid gatherings where people wear minimal clothing and have direct, intimate, skin-to-skin contact.

- Be mindful of activities (e.g., kissing, sharing drinks and eating utensils) that might increase the risk for spreading Mpox whenever you gather with others.

## **Mpox Vaccination Basics**

- Mpox is caused by a virus that is related to the virus that causes smallpox. JYNNEOS is a 2-dose vaccine developed to protect against Mpox and smallpox infections. People need to get both doses of the vaccine for the best protection against Mpox. The second dose should be given 4 weeks after the first dose.

[Mpox Vaccine Recommendations](#) | [Mpox](#) | [Poxvirus](#) | [CDC](#)

Information adapted from:

CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/index.html>

MADPH: <https://www.mass.gov/monkeypox>