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| Mpox |
| Fact sheet for consumers |
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# What is mpox?

Mpox (formerly monkeypox) is a disease caused by infection with the monkeypox virus. It typically results in a mild illness associated with a rash. It is spread mostly through skin-to-skin contact with someone who has mpox. Most people recover within a few weeks.

# What are the symptoms of mpox?

Mpox symptoms can include a rash that can be painful and affect any part of the body including:

* genitals
* area around the anus and buttocks
* inside the mouth
* face
* hands and arms
* feet and legs.

The rash associated with mpox may involve vesicles, pustules, pimples or ulcers. The number of lesions varies. The rash may change and go through different stages, like [**chickenpox**](https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/chickenpox), before finally becoming a scab that falls off.

Other mpox symptoms can include general symptoms that can occur before or alongside the rash, such as:

* [**fevers**](https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/fever)
* chills
* muscle aches
* swollen [**lymph nodes**](https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/lymphatic-system)
* exhaustion
* headache
* anal and rectal pain
* pain on urination.

Symptoms may develop up to 21 days from close contact with someone with mpox.

Symptoms can resemble sexually transmitted infections (STIs) such as [**herpes**](https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/genital-herpes) or [**syphilis**](https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/syphilis) as well as other disases with a rash such as measles or chickenpox.

Most people with mpox have a mild illness and recover within a few weeks. In some circumstances, people may develop severe disease and require hospitalisation.

Children, pregnant women and people with a weakened immune system are considered at higher risk of developing severe disease.

# What should you do if you develop symptoms of mpox

If you develop symptoms of mpox you should stay home, restrict your contact with others, and seek medical care and testing without delay.

Wear a mask and call your GP clinic, [**Melbourne Sexual Health Centre**](https://www.mshc.org.au/), or your nearest sexual health service to let them know you will be attending. If you have any rashes, lesions, sores or scabs make sure these are covered.

# How does mpox spread?

Mpox does not spread easily between people. It is mostly spread from person-to-person through prolonged or intimate contact with someone who has mpox, especially with skin rashes, lesions, sores or scabs.

It can also spread through contact with clothing or linens (such as bedding or towels) used by an infected person. Sometimes it can spread through respiratory droplets (such as coughs and sneezes) from an infected person, however this is less likely.

It does not spread via casual contact. In endemic areas, spread of mpox may occur through contact with infected wild animals.

People with mpox are infectious from the time that they develop their first symptoms until all lesions crust, dry and fall off with a new layer of skin forming underneath.

# Who is at risk?

Anyone who has close skin-to-skin contact (such as prolonged or intimate contact) with someone who has mpox can become infected.

People at highest risk are men who have sex with men, particularly those who are travelling to outbreak areas, have multiple sexual partners or attend large parties or sex on premises venues.

In Victoria, no infections have been seen so far in children and women.

# How can mpox be prevented

Mpox can be prevented by avoiding contact with people with suspected or confirmed mpox. This includes contact with any potentially contaminated materials, such as bedding and towels, that have been in contact with an infected person.

Mpox can also be prevented by limiting your number of sexual partners and ensuring that you have their contact details, until you are fully vaccinated. Vaccination will also protect people from mpox.

People who are at highest risk should be aware of the symptoms of mpox and self-monitor for symptoms.

Staying vigilant with hygiene measures including washing hands with soap and water or alcohol-based sanitiser is important.

# What treatment is available for mpox?

Treatment for mpox is mainly supportive. Mpox typically results in mild illness and most people recover within a few weeks. Effective antiviral treatments are available for severe disease so early testing and presentation to a health service is important.

What immunisation is available against mpox?

In Victoria, the mpox vaccine (JYNNEOS® vaccine) is available free-of-charge for eligible people. If you are eligible, you can get vaccinated now.  
  
Mpox vaccine eligibility includes:

* All sexually active gay and bisexual men (cis and trans).
* Sexual partners of the above.
* Sex workers.
* Immunisation providers who are administering the ACAM2000™ smallpox vaccine.
* Laboratory workers who analyse specimens from mpox cases.

Two doses of mpox vaccine are required for optimal protection. The mpox vaccine takes approximately 14 days before it is effective. The vaccine is administered into the upper arm.

People who have had their first dose at least 28 days ago should have a second dose of mpox vaccine for optimal protection.

Mpox vaccines are available through certain sexual health clinics and health services.

For more information on vaccination see visit the Department of Health’s web page [**Mpox**](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/infectious-diseases/monkeypox) **(monkeypox)** <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/infectious-diseases/monkeypox-mpx>.

# Where to get help

* Always call an ambulance in an emergency (triple zero) Tel. 000
* Emergency department of your nearest hospital
* Your [GP (doctor)](https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/serviceprofiles/general-practitioner-services)
* [NURSE-ON-CALL](https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/serviceprofiles/nurse-on-call-service) Tel. [1300 60 60 24](tel:1300606024) – for confidential health advice from a registered nurse, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
* Melbourne Sexual Health Centre Tel. (03) 9341 6200 or 1800 032 017 or TTY (for the hearing impaired) (03) 9347 8619
* Thorne Harbour Health (formerly Victorian AIDS Council) Tel. (03) 9865 6700 or 1800 134 840
* Counseling and support services are available through your GP or health service. Further information can also be found on the Department of Health Mental Health and Wellbeing Hubs website on <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/mental-health-and-wellbeing-hubs>

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