



1. What is mpox?

Mpox is a contagious disease caused by the mpox virus. It was discovered in 1958 when two outbreaks of a pox-like disease arose in colonies of monkeys kept for research. The first human case of mpox was recorded in 1970. It was rarely seen in the United States or many other countries until May 2022.

There are 2 types of mpox virus. The type that is currently in the US is less severe. The most common symptom is a rash, which may or may not be associated with flu-like symptoms. Most people do not need hospital care and recover in 2-4 weeks. Vaccines and antiviral treatment are available for mpox.

2. What are the signs and symptoms of mpox?

Mpox symptoms usually start within 3 weeks of exposure to the virus. The

most common symptom is a rash that may:

- Look like bumps, pimples, blisters, or scabs. It will go through several stages before healing. Generally, the rash starts as red, flat spots, and then becomes bumps. Those bumps can then become filled with fluid which turns to pus. The bumps then crust into a scab.
- Be on or near the genitals (penis, testicles, labia, and vagina), anus (butthole), mouth, or other areas like the hands, feet, chest, and face.
- Spread over the body or it may be limited to one area. There may be just a few bumps or blisters.
- Be painful and/or itchy. Some people have severe pain, especially if the rash is inside their mouth or anus.

People may also develop flu-like symptoms in addition to the rash. These can appear 1-4 days before the rash starts or after the rash starts. They include fever/chills, swollen lymph nodes, exhaustion, muscle aches, and headache.

Most people with mpox recover in 2-4 weeks.

3. How does mpox spread?

Mpox is known to spread by close, intimate and/or prolonged contact, including:

- Direct skin-to-skin contact with the rash, scabs, or body fluids from a person with mpox
- Contact with objects and fabrics that have been used by someone with mpox
- Contact with respiratory secretions from someone with mpox

This can happen from:

- Sex and other intimate contact, including kissing, massaging, cuddling
- Sharing fabrics and objects (such as clothes, bedding, towels, sex toys) that have not been cleaned
- Prolonged, close, face-to-face contact such as talking very closely face to face for a long time (about 3 hours or more)
- Living in a house, sharing a bed, or caring for someone with mpox



A person with mpox can spread it to others from the time symptoms start until the rash has healed, scabs have fallen off, and there is a new layer of skin. This usually takes 2 to 4 weeks.

A pregnant person with mpox can spread the virus to their fetus through the placenta.

Mpox is much less contagious than COVID-19. It is NOT spread through casual conversations or by walking by someone who has it.

Scientists are still researching more about how mpox is spread, including:

- If the virus can be spread when someone does not have [symptoms](#),
- How often it spreads through respiratory secretions, and
- Any other types of interactions or behaviors that may put people at higher risk.

See ph.lacounty.gov/mpox for more details and the latest information.

4. Who is at risk for mpox?

In this current outbreak in the U.S., the vast majority of people diagnosed with mpox are men who reported having sexual or close intimate contact with other men. But anyone, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity, who has been in close, personal contact with someone who has mpox is at risk.

As this is a new outbreak, public health organizations nationally and internationally are still learning about the situations or behaviors that may put people at increased risk. We will continue to share information as we learn more.

5. How is mpox treated?

Many people with mpox have a mild illness and recover without any antiviral treatment. This usually takes 2 to 4 weeks. There are no FDA approved medicines to specifically treat mpox. But an FDA approved antiviral medicine used to treat smallpox called tecovirimat (or TPOXX) can be used to treat people with mpox. TPOXX can be given to people with severe mpox, including lesions in sensitive areas or pain that is not controlled with over-the-counter remedies. It can also be given to people who are more likely to get severely ill (see *Who might be at higher risk for getting very sick?* below). Learn more at CDC [Patient's Guide to Mpox Treatment with TPOXX](#).

If you have mpox, your doctor can also prescribe non-mpox medicines that can help reduce pain and irritation from the rash or sores. For information on how to manage your symptoms, visit the CDC webpage [What to Do If You Are Sick](#).

6. What is severe mpox?

Most people with mpox have a mild illness, but for some people mpox can be serious. Signs of severe mpox can include:

- Rash or sores on or near the eyes
- Rash that spreads all over the body or blend together
- Pain in the rectum (butt) that makes it hard to go to the bathroom



- Pain in the mouth that makes it hard to eat and drink
- Rash that is bleeding or looks infected
- Symptoms that get worse or do not improve over time

Seek medical help right away if you get any of these symptoms or have other symptoms that concern you.

7. Who might be at higher risk for getting very sick?

Based on what we know from previous mpox outbreaks, the following groups are at higher risk for getting severe mpox, if they become infected. We don't yet know the extent of their risk for getting very sick if infected during the current outbreak.

- People who are immunosuppressed (have a weak immune system because of a treatment, disease, or infection). This includes people with uncontrolled or advanced HIV.
- People with a disease or condition that affects the skin such as eczema, atopic dermatitis, psoriasis, impetigo, severe acne, herpes, or burns.
- Children, particularly those who are under 8 years of age
- People who are pregnant or breastfeeding

Mpox lesions in the eyes, mouth, and rectum can cause severe pain and swelling and may become infected with bacteria. There is also a long-term risk of scarring.

During this outbreak, most people with mpox have been adults and have not required hospitalization.

8. What should I do if I think I have mpox?

Contact your doctor right away if you have a new, unexplained, rash or lesions on any part of your body. This is especially important if you were exposed to someone with mpox or suspected to have mpox. Cover all parts of the rash with clothing, gloves, and/or bandages and take steps to protect others. These include avoiding skin to skin contact and being physically intimate with others until you have been checked out by a doctor. Be sure to wear a mask when you see a doctor.

Call the Public Health Call Center at 1-833-540-0473 (open daily 8:00 am to 8:30 pm) if you don't have a doctor or health insurance. If you have a rash, you can also access services at Public Health's Sexual Health Clinics (see schedule [here](#)).

Until you know you don't have mpox, take steps to reduce the risk of spreading the infection by staying away from others. See [Isolation Instructions for People with Monkeypox](#).

9. How do you test for mpox?

If you have a rash that might be due to mpox, your doctor will evaluate you. Based on their assessment, they may swab your rash for testing. The swabs are sent to a lab, and the test result should be available in a few days. There are no self-tests or home tests for mpox at this time.

Until you know you don't have mpox, it is important to follow [mpox isolation instructions](#).



10. What should I do if I am diagnosed with monkeypox?

If you have been diagnosed with mpox, you should isolate to protect others. Follow the [Isolation Instructions for People with Mpox](#) which are available in several languages at ph.lacounty.gov/mpox.

Contact your sex partners and any people you had very close, intimate and/or prolonged contact with since your symptoms started. Do this as soon as possible so they can get consider getting [vaccinated](#) (if they have not already been vaccinated for mpox). Getting vaccinated after exposure may prevent mpox or make the illness less severe. They can also look out for any symptoms of mpox.

Please answer calls from Public Health. They will be in touch to ask you about your activities before and after you developed symptoms. This is to try to find out how you may have been exposed to mpox and to help to identify other people who may have been exposed.

11. How can mpox be prevented?

There are a number of ways to prevent the spread of mpox:

- Get vaccinated if you are eligible (see below)
- Avoid very close and/or prolonged contact with someone with mpox symptoms, especially:
 - Oral, anal, and vaginal sex, or touching the genitals or anus
 - Hugging, cuddling, massaging, kissing
 - Skin-to-skin contact with the rash on their body
 - Sharing towels, clothing, bedding, blankets, or other objects and materials (e.g., toothbrushes, cups, utensils, and sex toys) that have not been cleaned.
 - Talking very closely face to face for a long time (about 3 hours or more).
- Wash your hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. This is especially important before eating and after you use the bathroom. Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands.
- Wear appropriate protective equipment (mask, gloves, and gown) if you cannot avoid close contact with someone who has mpox symptoms.

12. What are other ways to lower the risk of getting mpox?

Here are some things that people can do to lower their risk of mpox:

- Talk to sexual partner(s) about any recent illness and new or unexplained sores or rashes including on the genitals or anus. Avoid sex or skin-to skin contact if either partner has signs of mpox or have been diagnosed with mpox.
- Don't share unwashed utensils or cups, towels, bedding, or clothing.
- Cover exposed skin in crowds.
- Use a condom. Condoms alone are likely not enough to prevent mpox. But they might reduce the risk, and may help prevent sores in sensitive areas, like the anus, mouth, or genitals.
- Reduce the number of sex partners
- Avoid riskier activities such as anonymous sex and sex parties.



Frequently Asked Questions

- Avoid going to places where people wear minimal clothing and where there is direct, intimate, skin-to-skin contact such as raves, parties, or clubs. If you do attend these settings or events, cover exposed skin to limit skin-to-skin contact when possible. Events where people are fully clothed and unlikely to have prolonged skin-to-skin contact are safer. But remember that activities like kissing may also spread mpox.

For more information see the CDC webpage, [Safer Sex, Social Gatherings and Mpox](#).

13. Is there a vaccine for mpox?

Yes. A vaccine called JYNNEOS is FDA approved to prevent mpox in people ages 18 and over. It is also available under FDA emergency use authorization (EUA) for people under age 18. It is a two-dose vaccine. It takes 14 days after getting the second dose of JYNNEOS to get the best immune response to the vaccine. But even getting one dose can provide some protection. It is important to note, neither one nor two doses of vaccine are 100% effective at preventing infection. It is still important to continue to take other steps to reduce your risk.

If the vaccine is given before a person is exposed to mpox, it helps to protect them from getting mpox.

If it is given after exposure, it may help to prevent the disease or make it less severe. It should be given within 14 days of exposure (ideally in the first 4 days).

If someone already has mpox the vaccine is not recommended. For more information about the vaccine, see [Monkeypox vaccine FAQs](#).

14. Who is eligible for the mpox vaccine?

Vaccine is now available to:

- Gay or bisexual men, or any men or transgender people who have sex with men or transgender people
- People of any gender or sexual orientation who engage in commercial and/or transactional sex (e.g., sex in exchange for money, shelter, food, or other goods or needs)
- People living with HIV, especially persons with uncontrolled or advanced HIV disease
- People who had skin-to-skin or intimate contact with someone with suspected or confirmed mpox, including those who have not yet been confirmed by Public Health

Eligibility may be expanded to other groups in future – for the latest information, see ph.lacounty.gov/monkeypox/vaccine.htm.

15. How can I get vaccinated?

If you are in one of the groups eligible for mpox vaccination, go to a [Public Health Vaccination Site](#) or visit Myturn.ca.gov to find a site near you. When you go to the location, be prepared to attest that you meet the eligibility criteria to receive a mpox vaccine.

Visit ph.lacounty.gov/monkeypox/vaccine.htm to see if you are eligible for vaccination.



16. What should I do if I am exposed to monkeypox?

Track your health. People who develop mpox usually get symptoms 7-14 days (and up to 21 days) after being exposed. You can continue your routine daily activities as long as you do not develop symptoms. Be prepared to isolate yourself from others if you develop mpox symptoms.

Get vaccinated if you have not already completed a two-dose mpox series. Getting a dose of mpox vaccine within 4 days after exposure can help prevent you from becoming infected. Getting a vaccine 4-14 days after exposure may make your infection less severe. Learn more at ph.lacounty.gov/monkeypox/vaccine.htm.

Please answer calls from Public Health. If you are named as a contact to someone with mpox, Public Health may be in touch with you to see how you are feeling and to offer vaccination if appropriate.

Follow [Guidance for Individuals Who Have Been Exposed to Mpox](#) for more information.

17. What kind of cleaning products work against mpox?

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has a list of disinfectant products that are registered for use against the mpox virus. The list includes popular products that many businesses and individuals already use. It can be found on the [EPA website](#). The website has a search tool where you can look up disinfectants by different factors such as product name, contact time, and surface type.

- Check that the product is EPA-registered
- Read the manufacturer's directions. Make sure this is the right product for your surface.
- Clean the surface with soap and water if the directions mention pre-cleaning before applying disinfectant or if the surface is visibly dirty. Dirt can keep the disinfectant from working.
- Follow the contact time instructions. The surface should remain wet for the amount of time stated in the instructions to be effective. Reapply if needed.

Regular laundry detergents can be used for cleaning clothes or linens (e.g., bedding and towels) used by someone with mpox.

Soiled dishes and eating utensils can be washed in a dishwasher with detergent and hot water or by hand with hot water and dish soap.

See CDC [Guidance for Disinfection of the Home and Non-Healthcare Setting](#) for more information and tips about cleaning during and after mpox.

18. Can kids get mpox?

Yes. Anyone can get mpox if they have been in close, personal contact with someone who has mpox. The risk of children getting infected with mpox during this outbreak is very low. While cases in children have happened in the U.S., they are very rare.

Children are at higher risk of getting mpox if they live with someone who has mpox, especially if they share a bed or other items with the infected person. If you have mpox or



suspected monkeypox, take steps to protect everyone in your home. See [Isolation Instructions for People with Mpox](#).

Adolescents who are physically intimate/sexually active with others or in situations like parties where they might have skin-to-skin contact are also at higher risk of getting mpox. This is especially true if they are in doing these activities with groups where mpox is spreading. For more information see the CDC webpage, [Safer Sex, Social Gatherings and Mpox](#).

19. How can I protect myself when traveling?

At this time, mpox is considered a low threat to the general public. It is much less contagious than COVID-19.

In addition to the prevention steps above, it is recommended that travelers avoid close contact with sick people. If you are traveling on a plane, avoid prolonged skin-to-skin contact. For example, while sharing an armrest. If you are staying in a hotel room or vacation rental, make sure that it was cleaned after the previous people left.

You should also avoid contact with dead or live wild mammals.

If you are traveling to Central and West Africa, avoid contact with animals that [can spread mpox](#) virus, usually rodents and primates. Also, avoid sick or dead animals, as well as bedding or other materials they have touched. This is because it is possible for people to get mpox from infected animals, either by being scratched or bitten by the animal or by preparing or eating meat or using products from an infected animal.

20. Where can I go for more information?

Los Angeles County, Department of Public Health

ph.lacounty.gov/monkeypox

ph.lacounty.gov/monkeypox/vaccine.htm

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/index.html

California Department of Public Health

cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Monkeypox.aspx