

Mpox (Monkeypox) Fact Sheet

What is mpox?

Mpox is in the orthopoxvirus family, the same family of viruses that includes smallpox.

Why is mpox important now?

It has recently been spreading in locations that do not typically report cases or local transmission, including the U.S., Canada, Europe, and Australia. Mpox is endemic in Central and Western Africa, and prior to 2022 almost all cases reported occurred in that region or had recent travel there. This type of mpox infection frequently resolves on its own and has a fatality rate of less than 1%.

Mpox symptoms

Symptoms often begin as flu-like symptoms that can include fever, headache, muscle aches, swollen lymph nodes, and exhaustion. Typically, a rash or bumps on the skin develop within 1-3 days after the onset of fever, but sometimes individuals only experience a rash and no other symptoms. The rash or bumps can look like pimples, blisters, or lesions that can appear in many places on the body including on the face, inside the mouth, other parts of the body like hands, feet, or chest, as well as in the genital or anal area.

How does mpox spread?

Mpox is primarily spread person-to-person when someone who has mpox has close, physical contact with someone else. Close contact with mpox means:

- Physical contact with a sick person's rash, bumps, or lesions.
- Contact with respiratory secretions during prolonged, face-to-face contact (3 hours or more without face coverings).
- Intimate physical contact such as kissing, cuddling, or sexual contact.
- Touching bed linens, clothing, bandages, or other materials of someone who is sick, especially materials that came in contact with lesions.

Brief interactions with someone without physical contact are unlikely to result in spreading the virus. Direct physical contact (typically contact with lesions or lesion material) or prolonged close contact for more than 3 hours is how mpox spreads.

The rash associated with mpox goes through different stages before healing completely. An individual sick with mpox is considered contagious from the onset of their symptoms until their rash, bumps, or lesions have fully scabbed, healed, and new skin has formed. This typically lasts 2-4 weeks.



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Vaccine Information

Smallpox vaccine, including JYNNEOS, can be used to reduce the likelihood of infection in people who may have been exposed to mpox or reduce the severity of symptoms if someone does get sick; vaccine must be administered prior to onset of symptoms to be effective against becoming infected. Currently, JYNNEOS vaccine is only available through the Colorado Dept. of Public Health & Environment (CDPHE) due to limitations in supply.

What should I do if I suspect myself or someone I know has mpox?

If an individual has skin lesions and suspects they have mpox, they should be medically evaluated. A medical provider can help determine if testing is appropriate, and if there are other possible explanations for a person's illness.

Resources

- [Preventing Mpox Spread in Congregate Settings](#)
- [CDPHE Mpox information](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control & Prevention Mpox Signs and Symptoms](#) (example photographs of mpox rash)
- [Mpox disinfection guidance](#)

Contact DDPHE_epi@denvergov.org or 720-865-5767 to report cases or ask mpox-related questions

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