

## Mpox: What You Need to Know

### What is mpox?

Mpox (formerly monkeypox) is a viral infection that can cause fevers, tiredness, headaches, swollen lymph nodes, and rash. The virus was first seen in humans in 1970; it was found mostly in Central Africa. In 2022, a global outbreak began that included thousands of infections in the United States.

### How does it spread?

The virus can spread from one infected person to another by:

- Touching the rash or scab
- Having face-to-face contact with an infected person
- Kissing, cuddling, or having sexual intercourse with an infected person

### How do I protect myself?

Do not touch anyone who has a rash that looks like mpox (fluid-filled or small, solid bumps on the skin). Wash your hands often using soap and water or hand sanitizer. Do not touch linens (e.g., sheets, pillowcases, towels) or clothing of someone with mpox. Do not share eating utensils with a person who has mpox. Ask your doctor whether you qualify for one of the vaccines to prevent mpox.

### How do I know if I have it?

The virus may start with symptoms such as:

- Feeling tired
- Fevers
- Headaches
- Lymph node swelling
- Muscle aches
- Sore throat

After a few days, a rash may develop anywhere on your body. This includes your face, hands/feet, abdomen, and/or genital region.

### What if I think I have it?

Avoid close contact with anyone until you see a doctor. Schedule a visit with your doctor or the health department. Your doctor can test you for the virus by swabbing the rash.

### What if I test positive?

Tell your close contacts so they can check themselves for symptoms. Cover your rash with gauze and/or bandages. Do not try to pop the lesions on the rash. This could cause a bacterial infection of your skin. Wear a well-fitting mask around other people until the rash is gone. Expect symptoms to last two to four weeks.

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## Mpox: What You Need to Know *(continued)*

### Are there treatments?

Most of the time your body can fight the virus without medicine. No treatments are approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for mpox. Because smallpox and mpox are similar, some smallpox treatments are being used for mpox. Ask your doctor whether you should take medicine for treatment or get the vaccine.

An mpox infection is over when you can no longer see a rash and the skin under the rash has healed.

### Questions for your doctor:

- Am I at high risk of getting mpox?
- Do I qualify for the vaccine to prevent mpox?
- How do I know if I'm at risk for severe disease?

### Where can I get more information?

Your doctor

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/mpox/your-health/index.html>

National Library of Medicine

<https://medlineplus.gov/mpox.html>

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### Notes from your family doctor