

## *What You Need to Know*

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### **What is mpox?**

Mpox is a viral disease that can be spread between animals and humans. It is present in several Central and West African countries, though mpox cases linked to international travel or imported animals have occurred in people outside of Africa. Mpox cases in the U.S. are rare. The main disease carrier of mpox remains unknown; however, African rodents and non-human primates (like monkeys) may hold the virus and infect people.

Since early May 2022, cases of mpox have been reported from countries that don't normally report mpox, including the United States. This outbreak of the mpox virus is spreading mostly through close, intimate contact with someone who has mpox.

### **How is mpox spread?**

Humans can get mpox from an infected animal through a bite or direct contact with the infected animal's blood, body fluids, or sores. Mpox can also be spread person to person through close, personal, often skin-to-skin contact, including:

- Direct contact with mpox rash, sores, or scabs
- Contact with objects, fabrics (clothing, bedding, or towels), and surfaces that have been used by someone with mpox
- Through respiratory droplets, secretions, or oral fluids from a person with mpox
- This contact can happen during intimate sexual contact, including:
  - Oral, anal, and vaginal sex or touching the genitals or anus of a person with mpox
  - Hugging, massage, or kissing and talking closely
  - Touching fabrics and objects during sex that were used by a person with mpox, such as bedding, towels, and sex toys

### **How long after exposure to mpox do symptoms begin?**

The incubation period (time from infection to symptoms) for mpox is usually 7–14 days but can range from 5–21 days.

### **What are the symptoms of mpox?**

The illness often or may begin with:

- Fever
- Headache
- Muscle aches
- Backache
- Swollen lymph nodes
- Chills
- Exhaustion

Within 1 to 3 days (sometimes longer) after a fever, a rash (often beginning on the face then spreading to other parts of the body) occurs. Lesions progress through several stages before falling off. The illness typically lasts for

2–4 weeks, and a person is considered infectious from when symptoms begin until lesions have crusted, those crusts have separated, and a fresh layer of healthy skin has formed underneath.

Although rarely fatal, symptoms can be extremely painful, and people might have permanent scarring resulting from the rash.

## Is there a treatment for mpox?

There is no specific treatment for mpox, although antivirals for smallpox may be used in those with high risk for severe illness.

## How can mpox be prevented?

- Avoid close, skin-to-skin contact with people who have a rash that looks like mpox. Avoid:
  - Touching the rash or scabs of person with mpox.
  - Kissing, hug, cuddle or have sex with someone with mpox.
  - Sharing eating utensils or cups with a person with mpox.
  - Handling or touch the bedding, towels, or clothing of a person with mpox.
- Isolate infected people from others who could be at risk for infection.
- Wash your hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer after contact with infected animals or humans.
- Use personal protective equipment (PPE) when caring for sick people.
- Avoid contact with animals that could harbor the virus (including animals that are sick or that have been found dead in areas where mpox occurs).

## If you have a new, unexplained rash or other mpox symptoms:

- See your healthcare provider right away
  - If you don't have a provider or health insurance, contact your local health department for resources.
  - When you see a healthcare provider for possible mpox, remind them that this virus is circulating in the community.
- Avoid sex or being intimate with anyone until you have been checked out.

## If you are diagnosed with mpox:

- Follow the treatment and prevention recommendations of your healthcare provider.
- Avoid sex or being intimate with anyone until all your sores have healed and you have a fresh layer of skin formed.

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