

Information for people with mpox

This information is for people who have been diagnosed with mpox

Mpox is an infection caused by the monkeypox virus.

What are the symptoms of mpox?

Mpox is usually a mild illness. Symptoms usually begin 3–21 days after contact with the virus and most people recover without specific treatment within a few weeks.

Some people get early symptoms such as:

- fever
- headache
- back pain, joint and muscle aches
- sore throat
- tiredness
- swollen lymph nodes.

Some people don't notice the early symptoms but can get:

- Rashes, pimple-like spots, blisters or sores on their bodies. These are usually found on the genitals, anus or buttocks. Often, people only have one spot or sore.
- Ulcers or sores in the mouth.
- Pain on urinating.
- Rectal pain (pain in and around the anus), discharge or bleeding, which may occur without a sore or rash.

The rash usually starts as flat and red, then spots might fill with fluid or pus. After 2–3 weeks the spots dry and become crusted scabs. The scabs will fall off and leave new but often discoloured skin underneath.

People vaccinated for mpox may still get the illness, but symptoms are usually mild.

How is mpox spread?

In Australia mpox is mainly spread through sexual activity and direct skin to skin contact with mpox spots, blisters or sores.

Mpox may also spread by:

- touching contaminated materials or items such as clothing, bedding, towels or personal items
- contact with body fluids from a person with mpox
- close face to face contact for a long time with a person with mpox.

What happens if I have mpox?

If you have tested positive for mpox, your doctor or someone from your local public health unit (PHU) or sexual health clinic will contact you to give you your results and advice.

You may be asked to change some of your daily activities to reduce the risk of spreading mpox to other people. Occasionally, you may be asked to stay home and isolate from other people if there is a higher risk of spreading mpox.

Your doctor will recommend a plan for your recovery. Most people with mpox will get better within a few weeks and can look after symptoms at home by staying hydrated and taking over-the-counter pain medicines (e.g. paracetamol, ibuprofen). Avoid touching your face or eyes, especially if you have the rash on your hands.

Some people can have a more severe illness or complications, particularly those with a weakened immune system, and may need to be admitted to hospital for treatment.

If you are worried or your symptoms get worse speak to your doctor or sexual health clinic, call 13HEALTH (13 43 25 84), or in an emergency, call Triple Zero (000) and tell them you have mpox.

How long will I be infectious?

A person can spread mpox from 4 days before symptoms start.

You are infectious until all your symptoms have gone and:

- all spots or sores have crusted, and
- scabs have fallen off and a fresh layer of skin has formed underneath, and
- any rectal pain (pain in or around the anus) has completely gone.

How do I protect other people?

To prevent the spread of mpox you should:

- Not have sex and avoid skin to skin contact with others. If possible, sleep in another room from others and use a separate bathroom at home.
- Cover skin spots or sores where possible with clothing or a waterproof dressing.
- Avoid touching spots or sores and wash your hands regularly with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser.
- If you have respiratory symptoms (a cough or sore throat) or sores in your mouth or throat, wear a mask when you are in a room with other people.

- Wash your hands regularly for 20 seconds with soap and running water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser.
- Do not share any items that might be contaminated, such as clothes, bedding, towels, utensils, toiletries, sex toys, needles or any other personal items.
- Regularly clean and disinfect any shared spaces at home and frequently touched surfaces and objects, especially those that have touched the skin rash or spots.
- Avoid visiting healthcare (unless seeking medical attention), childcare or aged care settings.
- Avoid close contact with people who are at a higher risk of severe infections, such as young children, older people, people with weakened immune systems, or pregnant people.

When you are no longer infectious, you can go back to your normal activities, but you should:

- use condoms for any sexual activity for 12 weeks
- not donate blood, cells, tissue, breast milk, semen or organs for 12 weeks
- clean and disinfect your home. This is important if you had scabs on your skin that may have fallen off at home.

Vaccination after a mpox illness is not needed. Read the [mpox fact sheet](#) for how to protect yourself from getting mpox again.

Who do I need to tell about my mpox illness?

Your nurse or doctor will help you find out if anyone else is at risk. With your permission the nurse or doctor can help you let your recent sexual partners or other contacts know (this can be done anonymously). In some circumstances, contacts can have a vaccination to prevent them from getting mpox.

Free and anonymous partner notifications services such as [Let Them Know](#) and [The Drama Down Under](#) are available.

Contacts of mpox should watch out for symptoms for 21 days after the last contact.

Contacts of mpox can get a free* mpox vaccine (a Medicare card is not needed) to help prevent illness. This is best given within 4 days after contact with mpox but can be given at any time. Find the nearest mpox vaccination centre by using the [mpox clinic finder](#).

If a contact develops symptoms, they should avoid close contact with others, speak to their doctor or local [sexual health clinic](#), wear a mask if they have respiratory symptoms and cover any skin rash.

* If you are accessing a GP clinic for vaccination, ask your vaccination provider if a consultation fee applies.

Further information and support

- Queensland Health Information for contacts <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/disease-control/conditions/information-for-contacts-of-mpox.pdf>
- Queensland Health Mpox fact sheet <https://www.qld.gov.au/health/condition/infections-and-parasites/viral-infections/mpox-monkeypox>
- Queensland Health Stop the rise of STIs support resources <https://www.stoptherise.initiatives.qld.gov.au/resources>
- Queensland Positive People - About mpox <https://www.qpp.org.au/mpox>
- Queensland Council for LGBTI Health – Mpox <https://www.qc.org.au/mpox>
- Let them know notification service <https://letthemknow.org.au/>
- The Drama Down Under notification service <https://www.thedramadownunder.info/>

For information in English and other languages:

- Mpox fact sheet / ECCQ Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland <https://eccq.com.au/resources/mpox-factsheet/>
- For free help in your language, call the Translating and Interpreting Service on 13 14 50.

Help and assistance

- Get qualified health advice 24/7 for the cost of a local call on 13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84).
- If you are in an emergency situation, call 000 immediately.
- For further assistance, please contact:
 - your local doctor,
 - sexual health clinic <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/clinical-practice/guidelines-procedures/sex-health/services/find-service#qld>
 - or nearest Public Health Unit <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/system-governance/contact-us/contact/public-health-units>