

What is mpox?

About mpox

Mpox isn't in our country yet, but because of the outbreaks in nearby countries, it's good to know more about it and how to protect yourself and others.

Mpox is caused by a virus that is part of the same family as the virus that causes smallpox. There are two types of mpox, clade I and clade II. No matter what type of mpox it is, people with mpox often get a rash, along with other symptoms. The virus that causes mpox has been found in small rodents, monkeys and other mammals that live in parts of Central and West Africa. In some of these areas, animals spread mpox to people, then people can give the virus to other people. In the outbreak happening now, mpox is mostly being spread from person to person.

Signs and symptoms

Mpox can cause a rash that may look like pimples or blisters anywhere on the body, including the hands, feet, chest, face, or mouth, and sometimes on or near the genitals or anus.

The rash can cause severe pain and scarring in some people and can last for weeks.

Symptoms can include:



Fever



Chills



Swollen lymph nodes



Muscle aches and backache



Exhaustion



Respiratory symptoms like sore throat, nasal congestion, or cough



Headache



Rash



How is mpox spread?

Mpox can be spread from the time symptoms start until the rash has fully healed and a fresh layer of skin has formed. The virus can be spread from person to person through close, often direct skin-to-skin contact including:

- **Direct contact with mpox rash**, scabs, or certain body fluids like saliva, snot, or mucus
- **Intimate contact like sex, kissing, or hugging**
- **Touching objects** (cups, plates), **fabrics** (clothing, bedding, or towels), **and surfaces** that have been used by someone with mpox but haven't been cleaned yet.
- Pregnant people with mpox can pass the virus to the fetus during pregnancy or to newborns during and after birth

Mpox is NOT spreading through casual contact like you have with people when you're working in an office, going to the market, or riding in a bus.

How can you protect yourself?

- **Avoid close, skin-to-skin contact** with people who have a rash that looks like mpox.
- Do not kiss, hug, cuddle, or have sex with someone with mpox.
- Avoid contact with objects and materials that a person with mpox has used, such as utensils, bedding, or clothing.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

What should I do if I was exposed to mpox?



- **Watch for symptoms for 21 days** from the last time you were exposed to mpox. You can continue your regular daily activities as long as you do not have signs or symptoms of mpox.
- **If you have a new or unexplained rash** or other mpox symptoms, see a doctor and get tested for mpox.
- **If you do get mpox**, stay away from other people as much as possible, cover your lesions, and wear a mask around others until your rash has cleared up.



Who is at risk of severe disease?

Mpox can be very dangerous for some people, such as:

- People with severely weakened immune systems or uncontrolled HIV
- Children younger than 1 year old
- People with a history of eczema
- People who are pregnant

If they get sick with mpox, they may need extra care to help them get better.

For more information, visit [cdc.gov/mpox](https://www.cdc.gov/mpox).