

What is mpox?

Mpox is caused by infection with the mpox virus. Mpox virus is part of the same family of viruses as variola virus, the virus that causes smallpox. Mpox symptoms are similar to smallpox symptoms, but milder, and mpox is rarely fatal. Mpox is not related to chickenpox.

I was exposed to mpox, what should I do?

People who were exposed to mpox should seek out vaccine for Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP). PEP is given to high-risk close contacts to mpox. If given within four days of exposure it can help to prevent disease. If given 5-14 days from last exposure, it may not prevent disease but greatly reduce the risk of serious illness. If you are told by a partner that they have mpox or were exposed to mpox, you should seek out vaccine to prevent an infection. The North Dakota Department of Health will also work with people with mpox to identify other close contacts to refer them to a provider to receive PEP. Mpox vaccine supplies are low and anticipated to slowly increase through 2023.

People should also monitor for symptoms for at least **21 days** following the last exposure to a person with mpox. If during this time you develop symptoms, contact your health care provider to arrange testing.

While people who were exposed to mpox don't need to quarantine at home, it is recommended that during the monitoring period that people limit any close physical or sexual contact with others. People should also not share clothing, bedding or towels with others that has not been properly laundered. Disinfection guidance for household surfaces and laundry are available online at <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/mpox/specific-settings/home-disinfection.html>.

What are the signs and symptoms of mpox?

Mpox might start with symptoms like the flu/COVID-19, with fever, low energy, swollen lymph nodes, and general body aches. Within one to three days (sometimes longer) after the appearance of fever, the person can develop a rash or sores. The sores will go through several stages, including scabs, before healing. They can look like pimples or blisters and may be painful and itchy.

The rash or sores may be located on or near the genitals (penis, testicles, labia, and vagina) or anus (butt) but could also be on other areas like the hands, feet, chest and face. They may also be limited to one part of the body.

People with mpox may experience all or only a few of these symptoms. Most people with mpox will get the rash or sores. Some people have reported developing the rash or sores before (or without) the flu-like symptoms.

What should I do if I become ill during this monitoring period?

Unless it is an emergency, DO NOT GO to a clinic or hospital without first calling ahead. Calling first will help the clinic or hospital prepare to greet you and take care of you in the safest possible way. If you must go to the hospital before calling, notify staff immediately that you are being monitored for mpox.

How do I get tested for mpox?

If you develop symptoms of mpox, your doctor will assess you. Testing for mpox is noninvasive and does not require any blood. Your provider will vigorously swab one or more of your lesions. They will then submit the sample to the appropriate lab for testing. Typically results take 1-2 days from when you are tested. During this time, you should self-isolate and stay home until you get your results.

What treatments are available for mpox?

There are currently no treatments specifically for mpox. However, mpox and smallpox viruses are genetically similar, which means that antiviral drugs developed to protect against smallpox, such as tecovirimat (TPOXX), may be used to treat mpox. This treatment may be recommended for people who are more likely to get severely ill, like patients with weakened immune systems, or people with complications from the infection or symptoms not controlled with supportive care.

What can I do to prevent myself from getting mpox?

There are multiple steps you can take to avoid getting mpox.

1. Avoid skin-to-skin contact with people who have a rash that looks like mpox.
2. Do not handle or touch the bedding, towels or clothing of someone who has mpox.
3. Wash your hands often or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
4. Know who your intimate partners are and try to limit the number of partners you have.
5. Get vaccinated for mpox when it is available to you. Check out [our website](#) for vaccine availability in your area.

Do condoms prevent me from getting mpox?

Condoms during sex are an important way to protect yourself and others from HIV and other STIs like gonorrhea, chlamydia and syphilis. However, it is not known if condoms reduce the risk of getting or giving someone mpox during sex. Cases in the United States have reported condom use and still acquired mpox. Mpox is spread by intimate or close contact with the infected sores of someone who is infected with mpox. It can also be spread by close contact which can include, but is not limited to face-to-face coughing or sneezing, kissing, licking, skin-to-skin rubbing or sharing personal items, bedding, towels, clothing or utensils.