



Information for contacts of mpox

You have been given this factsheet as you have been identified as having had contact with someone who has mpox, or potentially with infectious material from a person with mpox.

What is mpox?

Mpox (previously known as monkeypox) is a viral illness that has been increasing globally, including in Australia, since 2022.

Mpox is usually a mild illness, with most people recovering fully within 2 to 4 weeks, but some people can become very unwell.

How does mpox spread?

Mpox can be spread by direct, intimate, and very close contact with someone with mpox, including through:

- skin-to-skin contact (e.g. touching, anal, oral or vaginal sex)
- prolonged face-to-face contact (e.g. talking, singing, breathing)
- mouth-to-mouth contact (e.g. kissing)
- contact with contaminated materials (e.g. clothing, linen, towels, or surfaces).

People with mpox may be infectious (be able to pass the mpox virus on to others) up to four days before symptoms start, and until all lesions have crusted, scabs have fallen off, and new skin has formed underneath.

Why am I a contact?

You are considered at risk of developing mpox because you have had contact with someone who has mpox or potentially with infectious material from a person with mpox.

What can I do to prevent mpox?

Vaccination against mpox is available and is generally recommended as a preventative measure for people at higher risk of developing mpox because of lifestyle or occupational risk factors.

Vaccination is also recommended after exposure to a person with mpox and is most effective at preventing mpox if given within 4 days of contact with the infected person. However, it can still reduce the severity of infection if given within 5 to 14 days of contact.

Your public health unit will discuss the risks and benefits of vaccination with you and will advise whether you should be vaccinated.

What do I need to do?

It can take up to 21 days for people to develop symptoms of mpox after contact with someone with mpox and/or with items that may have been contaminated by a person with mpox. Public health officers will advise you when your monitoring period is over.

For 21 days from your last contact with a person who has mpox or with potentially contaminated items, or until advised by public health:

- Monitor for symptoms of mpox, including using a thermometer if available to measure your temperature.
- If you develop symptoms of mpox, including a temperature of 38°C or above, stay at home, avoid others, and contact your public health unit for further advice about testing for mpox.
- If you need to seek urgent medical attention, contact the emergency department or general practice ahead of time to let them know you are coming. Wear a surgical mask, cover any rash and lesions, and take this factsheet with you.

In a medical emergency always seek immediate health care or phone 000.



To reduce the risk of giving mpox to other people, for 21 days from your last contact with a person who has mpox or with potentially contaminated items, or until advised by public health:

- Wash your hands frequently using soap and warm water or an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Cover your mouth and nose when sneezing and coughing with paper tissues. Put used tissues into a rubbish bag and wash hands.
- If you work in a childcare, aged or disability care home, or healthcare setting, do not attend work if you have any symptoms.
- Avoid childcare and aged care facilities (unless you work there); avoid healthcare facilities unless seeking medical attention.
- Avoid contact young children, older people, immunocompromised people, and pregnant people.
- Do not donate blood, cells, tissue, breast milk, semen, or organs.

Your public health unit may provide additional advice on working from home. This will depend on an assessment of your contact with mpox, the type of infection the case had and if you work in a high-risk setting such as childcare, aged care or healthcare facilities.

Symptoms of mpox

Symptoms of mpox can start 3 to 21 days after contact with a person with mpox, but most commonly starts at around 8 days.

Symptoms can include:

- a rash or skin lesion(s) on any part of the body
- fever or chills
- headache
- muscle or joint aches
- backache
- sore throat
- swollen lymph nodes
- tiredness
- anal and/or rectal pain
- bloody stools or diarrhoea
- pain while passing urine.

The rash can appear as lesions like pimples, blisters, or sores, which can then burst to form ulcers or scabs. These can vary in size and number (from one to many).

People who have received a vaccine for mpox may experience a milder illness.

How will I be contacted by public health?

You may be contacted regularly by public health staff to check on your temperature and any new symptoms. This may be by phone, email, or text message.

Who do I contact if I have symptoms or questions?

You should contact your local public health unit:

https://www.health.wa.gov.au/articles/a_e/contact-details-for-public-health-units

More information is available at [Mpox \(monkeypox\) \(healthywa.wa.gov.au\)](https://www.health.wa.gov.au/articles/a_e/contact-details-for-public-health-units)