

What is mpox?

Mpox is typically a rare disease caused by the mpox virus. During 2022, cases of mpox have been reported in areas where mpox is not usually found. This includes various countries around the world, throughout the U.S., and here in Ohio. The type of mpox seen in this outbreak is rarely fatal, and most people recover from their illness within 2-4 weeks without needing any specific treatment. However, some people with mpox infection may be at higher risk for severe illness, including people who have weakened immune systems.

At this time, the risk of mpox in the U.S. and Ohio is believed to be low. Mpox does not spread easily between people, but anyone in close contact with a person with mpox can get it and should take steps to protect themselves.

What are the symptoms of mpox?

Mpox symptoms usually appear one to two weeks after infection, but sometimes this can extend to 3 weeks.

Mpox can cause a rash which may look like pimples or blisters and will go through several stages, including scabs, before healing. The rash may be located on one or more areas of the body including: the hands, feet, chest, face, genitals, or inside the mouth, vagina, or anus. Some people may also experience flu-like symptoms, which can include fever, headache, muscle aches, sore throat, cough, swollen lymph nodes, chills, or exhaustion. Sometimes, people get a rash first, followed by other symptoms. Others only experience a rash.

Mpox can be spread from the time symptoms start (rash or flu-like symptoms) until the rash has healed, all scabs have fallen off, and a fresh layer of skin has formed. This can take several weeks. Most infections last 2-4 weeks and resolve without medication. There are no treatments specifically for mpox, but antiviral drugs may be recommended for some people.

What should I do if I have symptoms?

See a healthcare provider if you notice a new or unexplained rash or other mpox symptoms.

Avoid close contact (including intimate physical contact) with others until a healthcare provider examines you. Avoid close contact with pets or other animals until a healthcare provider examines you.

If you're waiting for test results, follow the same precautions.

If your test result is positive, stay isolated until your rash has healed, all scabs have fallen off, and a fresh layer of intact skin has formed.

How does mpox spread?

Mpox can spread from person to person through close contact, including:

- Direct contact with the infectious rash, sores, scabs, or body fluids from a person with mpox.
- Respiratory secretions during prolonged, face-to-face contact.
- Indirect contact with personal items that previously came into contact with the infectious rash, sores, scabs, or bodily fluids from a person with mpox (for example: clothing, bedding, or towels).

Mpox can spread during intimate contact between people, including during sex, as well as activities like kissing and cuddling. Anyone can get mpox if they have close personal contact with someone who has symptoms of mpox.

People who do not have mpox symptoms cannot spread the virus to others.

How can mpox be prevented?

People should take the following steps to prevent getting mpox:

- Avoid close, skin-to-skin contact with people who have a rash that looks like mpox.
- Do not touch the rash or scabs of person with mpox.
- Do not kiss, hug, cuddle, or have sex with someone with mpox.
- Do not share eating utensils or cups with a person with mpox.
- Do not handle or touch the bedding, towels, or clothing of a person with mpox.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

If you are sick with mpox:

- Isolate at home.
- If you have an active rash or other symptoms, stay in a separate room or area away from people or pets you live with, when possible.

What treatments are available for mpox?

There are no treatments specifically for mpox virus infections. However, because of genetic similarities in the viruses, antiviral drugs used to treat smallpox may be used to treat mpox infections.

Antivirals, such as tecovirimat (TPOXX), may be recommended for people who are more likely to get severely ill, like patients with weakened immune systems.

Is there a vaccine to prevent mpox?

Because mpox and smallpox viruses are genetically similar, vaccines developed to protect against smallpox viruses may be used to prevent mpox infections.

The U.S. government has two stockpiled vaccines—JYNNEOS and ACAM2000—that can prevent mpox in people who are exposed to the virus. Vaccines may be recommended for people who have had or may have contact with someone who has mpox, or for healthcare and public health workers who may be exposed to the virus.

Could my pet get mpox?

Mpox is zoonotic, meaning it can spread between animals and people. However, CDC does not currently believe that mpox poses a high risk to pets. The situation continues to be closely monitored.

During previous outbreaks, mpox did not spread to domestic animals (other than prairie dogs) and there is no reason to believe this will happen during the current outbreak. Out of an abundance of caution, it is still recommended that people with mpox avoid interacting with animals and find someone else to take care of their pets while they recover.

For more information, please visit these websites:

- CDC Mpox: www.cdc.gov/mpox