

What Should I Know About Monkeypox (MPX)?

What is Monkeypox (MPX)?

It's a rare disease caused by infection with the monkeypox virus. The MPX virus is part of the same family of viruses as smallpox. MPX symptoms are like smallpox symptoms, but milder; and rarely fatal. Monkeypox is not related to chickenpox.

- As of August 5, 2022 there has been 1 confirmed MPX case in Berkshire County
- There have been 174 confirmed cases in Massachusetts

How serious is MPX?

In the U.S., there have been no deaths associated with MPX so far, but the rash can be extremely painful. About 10% of patients have been hospitalized to manage pain associated with the rash. Most people recover in 2-4 weeks.

What are the possible symptoms of MPX?

Some symptoms may develop before others, or not at all. A rash is the most common symptom.

- Rash: May appear as pimples or blisters on the face, inside the mouth, on the hands, feet, chest, genitals, or anus
- Flu-like symptoms: Fever, chills, headache, muscle aches, swollen lymph nodes, exhaustion
- Respiratory symptoms: Sore throat, nasal congestion, cough

How does MPX spread?

People who do not have MPX symptoms cannot spread the virus to others. When someone has symptoms, it spreads person-to-person, in several possible ways:

- Touching the infectious rash, scabs, or body fluids
- Respiratory secretions (spit/saliva) during prolonged, face-to-face contact, or during intimate physical contact, such as kissing, cuddling, or sex
- Touching items (such as clothing, towels, bedding) that touched the infectious rash or body fluids
- Pregnancy, pregnant people can spread the virus to their fetus

How is MPX spread, cont.

MPX is not considered a sexually transmitted disease because of the various routes of transmission. People of any sexual orientation or gender identity can get sick and spread monkeypox via the ways listed above, especially if a household member is sick.

Currently, many of the MPX cases are within networks of self-identified gay and bisexual men, other men who have sex with men, and transgender individuals who have sex with men. People within these communities should take extra precautions and consider vaccination.

What should I do if I have symptoms and suspect MPX?

- If you have a known or likely exposure and have developed symptoms, you need to isolate at home until advised by a medical professional
- If you must go out, cover your rash and wear a well-fitting mask
- Contact your medical provider for assessment, lab testing, and treatment

What should I do if I had a known contact with someone who has MPX?

- Watch for symptoms. It can take up to 3 weeks for symptoms to begin.
- Consider vaccination. When administered before or within 2 weeks of exposure, the JYNNEOS vaccine can help protect against monkeypox illness or reduce severity of symptoms. While the vaccine consists of 2 shots, 28 days apart, **MA is currently prioritizing first doses to as many people as possible.**

Who is currently eligible for MPX vaccination in Massachusetts?

- Anyone that had a sexual partner in the past 14 days who was diagnosed with monkeypox
- Anyone that had multiple sexual partners in the past 14 days in a jurisdiction with known monkeypox cases
- Known contacts identified by public health via case investigation, contact tracing, and risk exposure assessments

Where could I get the MPX vaccine if I'm eligible?

The vaccine sites closest to Berkshire County are:

- BMC Brightwood Health Center in Springfield, call 413-794-4458 for an appt
- Tapestry Health in Springfield, call 413-586-2016 ext. 121 for an appt

Online resources:

<https://www.mass.gov/monkeypox>

<https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/response/2022/index.html>