

# Mpox (Monkeypox) Recommendations for Nova Scotians

Since May 2022, an outbreak of a disease called mpox has been taking place in many countries where it doesn't normally happen, including Canada.

## What should you do?

- ✓ Know the symptoms
- ✓ Watch for symptoms
- ✓ See a doctor or nurse if you have symptoms

## What are the symptoms of mpox?

Symptoms can last 2-4 weeks.

Usually, infections start with flu-like symptoms, including:

- Fever or chills
- Swollen lymph nodes
- Intense headaches
- Muscle aches
- Joint pain
- Back pain
- Fatigue



1-5 days later a skin rash appears, with blisters that can appear on hands, feet, mouth, and/or genitals. The rash may start in one place and spread to other parts of the body, and eventually will form scabs that will fall off.

Sometimes, symptoms are different than the usual presentation, please see a doctor or nurse if you have any suspicion of symptoms.

## How is mpox spread?

Mpox can be spread through:

- Contact with sores and blisters, including scabs
- Contaminated items like bedding, towels, or sex toys that have mpox virus on them
- Respiratory droplets such as coughs and sneezes during close, face-to-face contact over several hours

Mpox is not known to infect people through sex, like syphilis or HIV. But when sexual activity involves close contact, the risk of an infection increases.

Symptoms can start 5 to 21 days after exposure to the virus.

Most of these recent cases are happening through close contacts between men having sex with men.

Any person who has close contact with a mpox case could catch it.

Stigmatizing people because of a disease is NEVER okay. Anyone can get or pass on mpox, regardless of their sexuality.

## Protecting yourself and others

If you develop symptoms, visit your doctor or a clinic. A health provider can take a look and see if you need testing or treatment. Testing is important to help control the risk of someone else becoming sick. Tell the health provider ahead of time that you think you might have mpox.

## If you are experiencing symptoms of mpox, until you see a health care provider or clinic to be tested, or have been diagnosed with mpox, follow these ways to avoid spreading mpox to others:

- Wear a mask.
- Do not share towels, clothing, sheets, or other things that have touched your skin.
- Don't get close to others, including people you live with. Do not have sexual contact with others.
- Clean your hands, and objects and surfaces that you touch regularly.
- Keep any sores or blisters covered as much as possible (e.g. wear long sleeves and long pants).

In Nova Scotia, Public Health staff contact all people who have possible and confirmed cases of mpox, along with people who have been in close contact with them.

Public health provides information about ways to stop the spread of mpox.

A vaccine that helps protect against mpox may be recommended by public health for people who are found to be at higher risk of infection.

If you have been in close contact with a person with a mpox infection, monitor for symptoms.

## Can mpox be treated?

- Most people with mpox have mild symptoms which will go away after 2-4 weeks.
- Treatment for mpox is usually to try to control symptoms (e.g. fever, dehydration, any other infections that could develop).

## Who may be more at risk of severe disease?

- People who are immunocompromised
- Young children
- People who are pregnant



## Why are many cases in this global outbreak among men in 2SLGBTQIA+ communities?

Viruses like mpox spread through contact in social networks. Some 2SLGBTQIA+ men are part of social networks that cross countries. This includes travel to large gatherings which may explain why mpox is visible in these communities right now. Many men in these

networks are active in protecting their health, including getting tested for sexually transmitted infections (STIs). This may have led to earlier detection of the outbreak in 2SLGBTQIA+ communities, and outbreaks may also be found in other communities.