

# Mpox:

## What you need to know

*Last Updated: August 19, 2024*

### WHAT IS MPOX?

Mpox, also referred to as monkeypox, is an “orthopoxvirus.” There are twelve orthopoxviruses in the world. Both humans and animals can get these viruses. For humans, the disease is like smallpox, but less severe.

### IS IT A NEW VIRUS?

No. Mpox is new in Canada, but it is found across the world, most commonly in central and western Africa.

### HOW DOES IT SPREAD?

- Mpox can spread from person-to-person through **respiratory droplets** or through close, physical contact with someone who has mpox (especially from contact with the **rash, bodily fluids, and/or scabs**).
- Mpox can also spread by touching materials and objects (e.g. clothing, bedding, towels, eating utensils, and dishes) that may be contaminated.
- Mpox can also spread from someone who is pregnant to the fetus, or from a parent to a child during or after birth.

### WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

Initial symptoms of mpox may include fever, chills, headache, swollen lymph nodes, muscle pain, and fatigue followed by a rash or sores, usually one to three days later, on the palms of the hands, on the soles of the feet, inside the mouth, and/or on the genitals. In some cases, the rash is the first symptom. Most people recover on their own within 2 – 4 weeks.

### HOW DO I REDUCE MY CHANCE OF GETTING MPOX?

- Practice good hand hygiene.
- Reduce or limit the number of people you have close contact with, including sexual partners.
- Talk to sexual partners about sexual health, and use barriers such as gloves and condoms.
- Avoid sharing objects such as toothbrushes, sex toys and drug use supplies.
- Clean and disinfect frequently-touched surfaces and fabrics. Standard household cleaners/disinfectants can be used to kill the virus on surfaces.
- Avoid touching bedding and laundry that has been in contact with someone who has the virus.
- Avoid touching skin lesions or rashes on another person.
- Stay home if you are sick and encourage others to do the same.

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### WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I HAVE BEEN EXPOSED TO MPOX?

If you have had close contact with a confirmed or suspected case of mpox, please monitor yourself for symptoms for 21 days. If you develop symptoms, self isolate right away and contact your health care provider.

### WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I THINK I HAVE MPOX?

Please self isolate right away and contact your health care provider. Your health care provider will arrange testing. Public Health will follow up with confirmed positive cases and any of their close contacts. If you do not have a health care provider, please call ahead to a walk-in clinic, or call Southwestern Public Health at **1-800-922-0096**.

### I UNDERSTAND THAT THERE IS A VACCINE TO PREVENT MPOX EITHER BEFORE OR AFTER POTENTIAL EXPOSURE. WHO QUALIFIES?

Imvamune<sup>®</sup> vaccine is approved in Canada for protection against mpox. The vaccine contains weakened virus and cannot make you sick. The vaccine can be used for protection against mpox before getting exposed to the virus (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis) or after being exposed (Post-Exposure Prophylaxis). OHIP is not needed to receive the Mpox vaccine. Based on Ontario Ministry of Health guidelines, the following individuals are eligible for Imvamune vaccination clinics:

- a) Trans- or cis-gender, or two-spirited, or non-binary individuals who self-identify as belonging to the gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men (gbMSM) community AND at least one of the following:
  - Have received a diagnosis of bacterial STI (i.e., chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis) in the past 2 months;
  - Have had two or more sexual partners recently or may be planning to;
  - Have attended venues for sexual contact recently (i.e., bath houses, sex clubs) or may be planning to, or who work/volunteer in these settings;
  - Have had anonymous sex recently (e.g., using hookup apps) or may be planning to;
  - Engage in sex work or may be planning to, and their sexual contacts.
- b) Any individual who engages in sex work or may be planning to.

Household and/or sexual contacts of those identified for PrEP eligibility in parts (a) and (b) above AND are moderately to severely immunocompromised or pregnant may be at higher risk for severe illness from a mpox infection may be considered for PrEP and should contact their healthcare provider, or their local public health unit, for more information.