

Mpox

Mpox is a virus that can cause a painful rash or sores.

The virus spreads through direct contact with:

- Mpox rash or scabs.
- Saliva or mucous.
- Areas around the anus, rectum, or vagina.

The risk is low of getting mpox by touching objects, fabrics, or surfaces.

Symptoms

A rash or sores that look like bumps, pimples, blisters or ulcers.

They can be all over your body or just in certain parts like your face, hands, feet, on or inside the mouth, genitals or anus. The rash and sores can be painful and last for 2–4 weeks.

You may also have flu-like symptoms before or at the same time as the rash or sores.

- Fever.
- Headache.
- Muscle aches and backache.
- Swollen lymph nodes.
- Chills.
- Exhaustion.

Most symptoms start 7–14 days after exposure. Some may not appear for up to 21 days.

If you have symptoms, talk to a healthcare provider and isolate from others.

Only a healthcare provider can test for mpox.

Testing is widely available. You should get tested if you have symptoms of mpox. Results can take a few days, continue to isolate from others while you wait.

Most people get better on their own without treatment, but antivirals may help if you meet criteria for treatment. Your healthcare provider will help you decide the right treatment.

Certain activities may increase your risk of exposure.

- Sex or other intimate activities with multiple or anonymous people—like those met through social media, dating apps or at parties.
- Clubs, dance parties, saunas and other places with skin-to-skin or face-to-face contact with many people, especially if people are wearing less clothing.



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Prevent the spread of mpox.

You can spread the virus to other people until your rash or sores heal, and a new layer of skin has formed. It can take 2–4 weeks.

- **Avoid sex or intimate activities with anyone until after you talk with a healthcare provider.**
Oral, anal and vaginal sex; hugging, kissing, cuddling and massage; contact with bedding or other items that have the virus on them during or after intimate activities.
- **Stay home and isolate from other people in your household.**
- **If you can't fully isolate from others in your household or must leave home, wear a face mask and avoid physical contact.**
Wear clothing that covers your rash or sores when in shared spaces.
- **Do not share or let others touch your clothing, towels, bedding or utensils.**
Do not share a bed.
- **Do not share dishes, food, drink or utensils.**
Wash dishes with warm water and soap or in a dishwasher.
- **Wash your hands and clean shared surfaces, like countertops and doorknobs, often.**
Household members should also wash their hands often, especially if they touch materials or surfaces you may have touched.

If you choose to have sex while sick:

- Avoid kissing and other face-to-face contact.
- Cover all sores with clothing or sealed bandages.
- Wash your hands, sex toys and bedding before and after sex or other intimate activities.

This may help reduce—but not eliminate—the risk of spreading.

You may be eligible for vaccine.

Vaccine is available for people 18 and older who have recent exposure to mpox. Getting vaccinated helps reduce:

- Your chance of getting mpox.
- Symptoms if you get mpox.

You should get 2 doses at least 4 weeks apart. It takes time for your body to build protection after your second dose.

Vaccine is free, but your healthcare provider may want to bill for the cost of administration.



If you don't have a healthcare provider or insurance and need to get tested or treated for mpox, call us at (253) 649-1412.

Learn more at tpchd.org/mpox.



Tacoma-Pierce County
Health Department
Healthy People in Healthy Communities