

**MPXV
(MONKEYPOX)
INFORMATION
& FACT SHEET**

**THE GENDER
CENTRE
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WHAT IS MPXV

MPXV, commonly known as Monkeypox, is a viral infection that historically occurs in Central and West Africa. Since May 2022, there has been a global increase in monkeypox cases reported from multiple countries where monkeypox is not usually seen. Australia has also reported its first cases of monkeypox. The situation is dynamic, and health authorities are still learning about the infection.

Although MPXV may be spread by direct contact during sex, it is not a designated Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) as it can spread by direct contact with someone infected with MPXV without sex contact, via droplets from coughing or sneezing, bodily fluids, lesions or scabs on the skin, or contaminated objects, such as bedding or clothes. Anyone who has been in close contact with someone with MPXV is at risk.

STIGMA

Why is the media focusing on men who have sex with men?

Most cases detected overseas are among gay, bisexual or men who have sex with men. Researchers believe cases in the general population are not being reported. This difference in reporting has been attributed to the proactive health seeking behaviour of gay, bisexual or men who have sex with men, around sexual health. MPXV rashes can resemble some STIs, such as herpes or syphilis, leading to cases being detected in sexual health clinics around the world.

The risk of MPXV is not limited to gay, bisexual or men who have sex with men. Anyone who has close contact with someone who is infectious is at risk regardless of gender, sexual orientation or sexual activity.

Stigmatising people because of a disease is never acceptable. Anyone, regardless of gender, sexual orientation or sexual activity level can become infected with MPXV or pass it on.

#STOPTHESTIGMA

TRANSMISSION

HOW IS MONKEYPOX SPREAD?

- Direct skin-to-skin contact, from person to person
- Sexual Contact
- Infected droplets from coughing, sneezing or kissing
- Bodily fluids, lesions or scabs on the skin
- Via contaminated objects, such as bedding or clothes
- Anyone who has been in close contact with someone with MPXV is at risk

RISK

- Events such as festivals and concerts, where people are fully clothed and unlikely to have skin-to-skin contact, are low risk. But remember that close physical contact such as kissing, or where people may be sweating profusely may also spread MPXV.
- Events such as a party or club where there is less clothing worn, and therefore a higher likelihood of direct skin-to-skin contact, has some risk.
- Sex Clubs, Spas and Saunas have high risk of exposure.

SYMPTOMS

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF MONKEYPOX?

- Skin rash, lesions or sores
- Swollen lymph nodes
- Fever and chills
- Headache
- Muscle aches, back pain and joint pain
- Low energy and exhaustion
- Symptoms usually develop in 1-2 weeks but the incubation period (the time from infection to the onset of symptoms) of MPXV can be up to 21 days
- May develop a rash, which begins in the mouth and face, before spreading to other parts of the body, the rash may first appear in the genital areas
- The illness typically lasts for 2–4 weeks and is mild. Most people recover within a few weeks, and will be infectious for at least 21 days, but may be infectious for up to 8 weeks after recovering
- People may experience all or only a few of these symptoms. Most people with MPXV will get a rash, while others may develop sores before developing flu-like symptoms.

PREVENTION

HOW DO I PREVENT MONKEYPOX?

- Monitor for symptoms
- Vaccination if you are in a high risk group
- Avoid close contact with infected people
- Avoid high risk events such as parties or clubs where there is less clothing worn, and therefore a higher likelihood of direct skin-to-skin contact.
- Avoid contact with any materials that may have been in contact with an infected person, such as bedding or towels
- Exchange contact information with your sexual partners to assist with contact tracing if required
- Practise good hand hygiene. Wash your hands with soap & water or an alcohol-based hand sanitiser
- If infected abstain from sex for the duration of infection. It is not known how long the virus remains present in bodily fluids & excretions.
- Once recovered you should use condoms or dental dam during sexual activity for 8 weeks

EXPOSURE

WHAT IF I HAVE BEEN EXPOSED?

- Avoid contact with others and seek medical attention immediately.
- Call your GP or local sexual health clinic via phone or use telehealth services, please call ahead before presenting and wear a mask
- Call the NSW Sexual Health Infolink on 1800 451 624
- If possible, avoid public transport
- Wear a surgical mask
- Cover any lesions with clothing or dressings. Ask your GP or clinic what type of skin dressing to use
- Avoid skin to skin contact including sex or being intimate with anyone until examined
- Avoid gatherings, particularly if they involve close, skin-to-skin contact with other people
- If you've recently returned from overseas, have attended any dance parties, sex parties, spas or saunas, especially in Europe, Central or West Africa, keep an eye out for any symptoms for 21 days

INFECTED

WHAT IF I HAVE BEEN INFECTED?

If you develop any symptoms:

- Self-isolate
- Seek medical attention immediately
- Notify any close contacts.
- Abstain from sex for the duration of infection. It is not known how long the virus remains present in bodily fluids & excretions.
- Once recovered you should use condoms during sexual activity for 8 weeks as it is not known whether or how long MPXV remains present in semen or other genital excretions.
- If your Dr suspects you are infected, MPXV (Monkeypox) can be confirmed by testing blister fluid or scabs from a skin rash.

REPORTING

WHO DO I NOTIFY IF I AM INFECTED?

MPXV (Monkeypox) is a notifiable disease under the NSW Public Health Act 2010. Doctors, hospitals and laboratories must notify any suspected cases to the local public health unit immediately. Public health unit staff will then initiate a public health investigation, contact tracing and control measures.

If you are advised or you are a close contact of someone with confirmed Monkeypox, self-isolate immediately and call your GP or sexual health clinic. If you have questions about monkeypox, contact the NSW Sexual Health Infolink on 1800 451 624.

TREATMENT

Most people experience mild symptoms without the need for specific treatment and may only need over-the-counter pain medicines and or oral fluids as recommended by their Healthcare professional. There are some therapies that may be used for high-risk individuals, especially those who are immunocompromised.

VACCINATION

Vaccines are available for MPXV (Monkeypox)

Please stay up to date about potential vaccination via your State or Federal Department of Health website:

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/diseases/Pages/monkeypox.aspx>

Australian Department of Health - Information Page on Monkeypox

**TAKE
ACTION
TO
PROTECT
YOURSELF
AND YOUR
COMMUNITY**



STEPS

STAY INFORMED

- Seek information from trusted sources like local health authorities especially when travelling interstate and overseas
- Speak to your Dr or Sexual Health Clinic to discuss your risk
- Don't use Doctor Google as your information source
- If you have questions about monkeypox, contact the NSW Sexual Health Infolink on 1800 451 624.

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RISK ASSESSMENT

- Consider the type of event you are planning to attend and how much direct skin-to-skin contact is likely to happen
- If you feel unwell or sick, or have any rashes or sores, do not attend event or venues. Self-isolate and seek medical attention
- Assess sexual partners for rashes, scabs or sores
- If travelling or going to an event or venue where close contact is likely, check yourself for symptoms before you leave home

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TAKE PRECAUTIONS

- Wash hands with soap & water or an alcohol-based hand sanitiser
- Avoid high risk events
- Use a condom or dental dam when having sexual encounters
- Exchange contact information with sexual partners to assist with contact tracing
- Use personal protective equipment (PPE), including gloves and a N95 mask if you are caring for someone infected with monkeypox
- Vaccinate

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MONITOR

If you have been exposed, monitor for:

- Skin rash, lesions or sores
- Swollen lymph nodes
- Fever and chills
- Headache
- Muscle aches, back pain & joint pain
- Low energy and exhaustion

Isolate and seek medical attention if you have any of the above symptoms and think you have been exposed.

If you are caring for someone with monkeypox, use personal protective equipment (PPE), including gloves and a N95 mask.

MPXV

**For more
information
on MPXV
(monkeypox)
contact
NSW Sexual
Health
Infolink on
1800 451 624**

