

## Mpox vaccine

### What is the Mpox (Monkeypox) vaccine?

The Mpox vaccine protects against infection from the virus that causes mpox. If you are exposed to the virus, the vaccine can prevent illness or make the illness less severe. The vaccine is approved by Health Canada.

### Who should get the vaccine?

The vaccine is provided free for people at high risk of mpox infection including:

- Two-Spirit, transgender, non-binary people or cisgender males who belong to the gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men community who:
  - Have sex with more than one partner
  - Have sex with a partner who has more than one sexual partner
  - Had a sexually transmitted infection in the past year
  - Have casual sex
  - Engage in sexual contact in sex-on-premises venues
  - Have sex with sex workers
- Sexual partners of anyone meeting the above criteria
- Sex workers
- Staff or volunteers in sex-on-premises venues
- People who engage in sex tourism
- People who anticipate experiencing any of the above situations
- Canadian health professionals travelling to support mpox outbreaks

If you have been identified by public health as being a close contact of someone with mpox, it may be recommended that you get the vaccine.

### How is the vaccine given?

The vaccine is given as a series of 2 doses, at least 4 weeks apart.

It is important to keep a record of all immunizations received.

### What are the benefits of the vaccine?

The vaccine can prevent mpox or make the illness less severe. This makes it less likely for you to pass mpox to others.

Acetaminophen (e.g. Tylenol®) or ibuprofen\* (e.g. Advil®) can be given for fever or soreness. ASA (e.g. Aspirin®) should not be given to anyone under 18 years of age due to the risk of Reye syndrome.

\*Ibuprofen should not be given to children under 6 months of age without first speaking to your health care provider.

For more information on Reye syndrome, visit, [HealthLinkBC File #84 Reye syndrome](#).

### What are the possible reactions after the vaccine?

The vaccine is very safe. It is much safer to get the vaccine than to get mpox. The vaccine cannot give you mpox. Common reactions to the vaccine may include soreness, redness, swelling, itching and a lump where the vaccine was given. Other reactions include tiredness, headache, fever, chills, muscle or joint soreness, nausea and loss of appetite. Reactions to the vaccine are more common in people with atopic dermatitis (a type of eczema).

If you have concerns about any symptoms you develop after receiving the vaccine, speak with your health care provider or call [8-1-1](#) for advice.

It is important to stay in the clinic for 15 minutes after getting any vaccine. There is an extremely rare possibility of a life-threatening allergic reaction called anaphylaxis. This happens in less than one in a million people who get the vaccine. Symptoms may include hives, difficulty breathing or swelling of the throat, tongue or lips. If this reaction occurs, your health care provider is prepared to treat it. Emergency treatment includes administration of epinephrine (adrenaline) and transfer by ambulance to the nearest emergency department. If symptoms

develop after you leave the clinic, call [9-1-1](tel:9-1-1) or the local emergency number.

Always report serious or unexpected reactions to your health care provider.

### Who should not get the vaccine?

Speak with your health care provider if you have had a life-threatening allergic reaction to:

- A previous dose of a smallpox or mpox vaccine
- Any part of the mpox vaccine including ciprofloxacin, gentamicin or chicken protein

There is no need to delay getting immunized because of a cold or other mild illness. However, if you have concerns speak with your health care provider.

### Are there other considerations to getting the vaccine?

Speak with your health care provider if you:

- Have an immune system weakened by disease or medical treatment
- Are pregnant or breastfeeding

### What is mpox?

Mpox is a disease caused by the mpox virus. It is usually a mild illness and most people recover on their own after a few weeks. Children, people who are pregnant and people with weak immune systems may have a more serious illness. It can take up to 21 days to develop symptoms of mpox after being exposed to the virus.

### What are the symptoms of mpox?

Symptoms of mpox occur in 2 stages. In the first stage, symptoms can include fever, chills, intense headache, swollen lymph nodes, back pain, muscle soreness and weakness or lack of energy. Other symptoms may include sore throat, cough, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea. The second stage of the disease begins about one to 3 days after the first stage symptoms appear. Symptoms of the second stage include a rash that often starts on the face, legs or arms. It can also appear on other parts of the body such as the hands, feet, mouth, genitals and anus. The rash changes in appearance over time from raised spots to small fluid-filled blisters or sores which will form a scab and fall off. Symptoms of mpox may last 2 to 4 weeks.

Some people experience symptoms differently. For example, they may not have first-stage symptoms but will develop sores. They may have sores on only one or a few parts of the body.

### How is mpox spread?

Mpox can be spread by touching the mpox sores, fluid from the sores or items such as bedding, clothes or towels that have the mpox virus on them. It can also be spread through close face-to-face contact when a person with mpox coughs or sneezes. A person with mpox can spread the virus to others while they have symptoms and until all the scabs on their skin have fallen off and new skin has formed.



BC Centre for Disease Control  
Provincial Health Services Authority

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