

# Frequently Asked Questions

# Mpox

ALABAMA  
PUBLIC  
HEALTH

- 1. What is mpox?** Mpox is a very rare disease caused by infection with the mpox virus. It is usually found in Central and West Africa and does not occur naturally in the United States. However, cases have recently been identified in the U.S. with more cases expected. This situation is being closely monitored by public health.
- 2. How does mpox spread?** Mpox does not spread easily from person to person. It can spread through contact with infected animals or infected humans, or through contact with materials used by infected people (like clothing or linens). The virus typically enters the body through broken skin, respiratory droplets, or mucous membranes (eyes, nose, or mouth).
- 3. Is mpox a sexually transmitted disease?** Mpox has not previously been described as a sexually transmitted infection, though it can be passed on by direct contact during sex, i.e., via lesions on the skin. It is currently unknown if it spreads through semen or vaginal fluids. Because rashes can also emerge on the genitals and inside the mouth, oral sex could also be a route of transmission for the virus. Anyone who has close physical contact with someone who is infectious is at risk.
- 4. What are the signs of mpox?** Disease symptoms always involve a rash which begins after the start of other symptoms. For the current outbreak, cases have presented atypically, which means that most of the cases have had a rash to start in the genital or perianal region. Early signs include fever, malaise (a general feeling of discomfort), headache, swollen lymph nodes, and sometimes cough or sore throat. Other symptoms include muscle aches, backache, chills, and exhaustion. This clinical picture may change as more cases of mpox are diagnosed.
- 5. How is mpox treated?** In most cases of mpox, treatment is supportive, easing the symptoms of illness. Some cases, such as in persons with severe disease or high risk of severe disease, may need special antiviral treatment, which has to be obtained from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). An antiviral developed to treat smallpox (tecovirimat, commercialized as TPOXX) has been approved for the treatment of mpox and may be obtained. The Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) is in regular communication with the CDC about any treatment for mpox if needed.
- 6. How can you prevent mpox?** Steps to help prevent mpox include:
  - Avoiding contact with animals that could have the virus (such as animals that are sick or that have been found dead)
  - Avoiding contact with materials, like bedding, that have been in contact with a sick animal or person infected with this virus
  - Keeping infected patients away from others
  - Washing hands with soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer after contact with infected animals or humans.
- 7. What is happening now with mpox?** Currently, there is an international outbreak occurring that may not be associated with animals or travel to an area where this disease is more common. ADPH is monitoring this situation and alerting healthcare providers through our Health Alert Network.
- 8. Is there a vaccine for mpox?** There is a vaccine (Jynneos) that can help prevent or lessen the severity of mpox for exposed individuals. Some health departments and other clinics will have a limited amount of vaccine for selected high-risk persons. During this current outbreak, due to a limited vaccine supply, persons who have been in direct contact with a presumed or confirmed mpox are candidates for the vaccine. Some other persons who are candidates for vaccine include persons who have male-to-male sexual contact with other risk factors, including sexual contact with multiple, anonymous, or casual sex partners, treatment for an STD in the last 14 days, more than one partner in the last 14 days who is HIV positive on HIV PrEP or has an immunosuppressive condition. Mpox can be prevented if the vaccine is given up to four days after exposure. Vaccine given after four and up to fourteen days after exposure could reduce the severity of the illness but might not prevent the disease. Previous vaccination against smallpox may provide limited protection since both diseases are from the same family of viruses. People vaccinated against smallpox, in the past, will have some protection against mpox. People below the 40-50 age group are unlikely to have been inoculated against smallpox since vaccination ended in the world by 1980. Some people received the smallpox vaccine after 9/11 if they were first responders or medical personnel.
- 9. Will ADPH provide PPE?** ADPH will provide PPE if entities do not have ready access.
- 10. What should I do if I think I may have mpox?** Please contact your healthcare provider if you believe you have signs or symptoms of mpox.

For more information:

[cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox](https://cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox) • [alabamapublichealth.gov/mpox](https://alabamapublichealth.gov/mpox)