

Mpox (previously called monkeypox)

Public health information for gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men.

Mpox (previously called monkeypox) infection is a disease that can cause rashes and other symptoms. Learn how you can protect yourself and those around you from mpox.

Mpox is spread through close contact with a symptomatic person.



Mpox is spread by direct contact with an infected person's skin or body fluids. It is not considered a sexually transmitted disease, but it is often transmitted through close skin-to-skin contact, which can include sexual contact. Sexual contact can include oral, anal, and vaginal sex as well as touching the genitals (penis, testicles, vagina, vulva) or anus.

Notice if you develop symptoms.



People are infectious when they have a rash or other symptoms but they may have sores in their throat, anus, or vagina and not know it. Watch for symptoms including rash, fever and headache. Call your health care provider if you notice any of these symptoms.

Stop the spread.



If you have symptoms of mpox, take a break from sex, and talk to your health care provider as soon as possible. If you live with other people, isolate yourself until you are able to talk with a health care provider for further instructions.

It's okay to take a break.



If you're anxious about mpox, it is okay to take a break from sexual activity. If you are worried about your health, make an appointment with your health care provider.

For more information, visit doh.wa.gov/mpox or call 1-833-829-HELP

How to reduce your risk of infection during sex:

Ask your sex partners about symptoms. Find out whether your partner has experienced any sores or rashes in the past three weeks.

Example questions to ask are:

“I’m down to hookup, but I want to make sure both of us are feeling good since mpox is going around. Have you had any recent rashes or sores?”

“I want to make sure we are both on the same page with mpox. I haven’t had any new rashes or sores and haven’t been feeling sick. How about you?”

Consider having sex with your clothes on.

Reduce as much skin-to-skin contact as possible. Clothes, leather or latex gear provides a barrier to skin-to-skin contact. Be sure to clean clothes and gear between partners and after use.

There are lots of ways to take care of yourself: You can decide to take a break from sexual activity. If you still want to be sexually active, have virtual sex with no in-person contact, phone sex, or masturbate together at a distance without touching.

Use condoms to reduce exposure. Condoms may help reduce your exposure to mpox, however condoms alone are likely not enough to prevent mpox. You still may be exposed if you have skin-to-skin contact or share bedding/towels.

Stigmatizing people because of a disease is harmful, anyone can get mpox, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, or age.

Stay connected. If you’re participating in anonymous hookups, share contact information with any new partner to allow follow-up if either of you develops symptoms or gets diagnosed with mpox.

If you receive a notification from someone you had sex with, take it seriously. Call your health care provider as soon as possible. If you have been exposed and do not have symptoms yet, talk to a healthcare provider about vaccination. If you are diagnosed with mpox, let your sex partners know to ensure they get care .



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