

# Mpox (Monkeypox) Vaccine

## Get protected, get immunized.

- Vaccines make your immune system stronger. They build antibodies to help prevent diseases.
- Immunization is safe. It is much safer to get immunized than to get these diseases.

## What is mpox vaccine?

Mpox vaccine protects against *orthopoxvirus* infections such as mpox (previously called monkeypox) and smallpox. As of the date at the bottom of this information sheet, there are no cases of smallpox in Canada, but there are cases of mpox.

Mpox vaccine is approved for use in Canada.

## What is mpox?

Mpox is a rare disease caused by the mpox virus. It can infect humans. Mpox infection is usually mild and most people recover on their own after a few weeks. However, some people can get very sick. Early symptoms may include:

- fever
- muscle pain
- chills
- joint pain
- swollen lymph nodes
- back pain
- headache
- exhaustion (feeling very tired)

Most people with mpox infection will get a rash or sores which can be on the hands, feet, mouth, and genitals. The rash can last 14 to 28 days. You can spread mpox to others from the time your symptoms start until the rash goes away and your skin heals.

## Who is most at risk?

You are at risk if you have close contact with someone who has mpox (for example, you live with the person or have sexual contact with them). You may be at a higher risk of getting very sick if you:

- have a weak immune system
- are under age 18 years
- are pregnant

## How does it spread?

Mpox spreads through close contact with someone who has mpox. It may also spread if you have contact with bedding, sheets, or clothing that touches the rash and has virus on it. The virus enters the body through broken skin or your eyes, nose, or mouth. If you get the mpox infection while pregnant you can spread the virus to your unborn baby.

## How can I prevent mpox from spreading?

Here is what you can do to prevent mpox from spreading:

- Wash your hands with warm water and soap or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer often.
- Do not touch your face, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover your cough or sneeze into your arm or a tissue, not your hand.
- Stay home when you are sick or have skin sores.
- Practice safer sex (use condoms or other barriers against skin-to-skin contact).
- Avoid close contact with people who have mpox and their clothing, towels, or bedding.

See reverse for more information.

## Who should get mpox vaccine?

You may be able to get this vaccine if you have a higher risk of being exposed to mpox. You may have a higher risk if you identify as a man who has sex with men (MSM), and at least 1 of the following applies to you:

- You have more than 1 sexual partner.
- You are in a relationship where at least 1 of the partners has other sexual partners.
- You have had sexual or skin-to-skin contact at a venue such as a bath house, sex club, or sex party.
- You have had a sexually transmitted infection in the last year.

You may also have a higher risk if:

- You have sexual partners with any of the above risk factors.
- You are a sex worker.
- You went to or worked at a venue where people have sexual or skin-to-skin contact such as a bath house, sex club, or sex party.
- You travel to other countries for sexual partners.
- You might be involved in any of the above activities in the future.
- You work in a research lab and have direct contact with the orthopoxviruses as part of your work.
- You are a health care worker who will be working where there is an mpox outbreak.

You should also get this vaccine if you had close contact with someone who has mpox. It is best to get this vaccine within 4 days of close contact, but you can get it up to 14 days after. Once your symptoms start, you can no longer get the vaccine.

Call Health Link at 811 to find out if you should get this vaccine.

Mpox vaccine is licensed for people age 18 years or older. However, vaccine experts support using mpox vaccine for people of any age who are at high risk of being exposed to mpox or have had close contact with someone who has mpox. If you get the vaccine and are under age 18 years, this is called “off-label use.” There is limited information on the use of mpox vaccine in children. Studies done with similar vaccines show there were no safety concerns for children under age 18 years. Talk to your healthcare provider if you are under age 18 years before getting this vaccine.

## How many doses do I need?

If you are getting the vaccine because you have a high risk of being exposed to mpox, you need 2 doses, 4 weeks apart.

If you are getting the vaccine because you had close contact with someone who has mpox, you need 1 dose right away. A second dose is given 4 weeks later as long as you have not developed symptoms. You may need another dose if you have a weak immune system.

If you have had smallpox vaccine in the past, you still need 2 doses of mpox vaccine.

Talk to your healthcare provider about how many doses you need.

## How well does the vaccine work?

For mpox vaccine to work, you need to get it before mpox symptoms start. If you get mpox vaccine after contact with mpox virus, the vaccine can protect you from getting an mpox infection, or it can make the infection milder. If you have a weak immune system, the vaccine may not work as well.

## Where can I get mpox vaccine?

If you think you may be at higher risk for being exposed to mpox, call Health Link at 811 to see if you can get the vaccine. If you think you need the vaccine because of your work in a research lab, talk to your workplace health and safety department.

If you are a health care worker who will be working in another country with an mpox outbreak, talk to your workplace health and safety department.

Public Health will contact you if you are identified as a close contact of a confirmed case of mpox. If Public Health decides you need mpox vaccine, they will tell you where to go for the vaccine.

## Are there side effects from mpox vaccine?

There can be side effects from the mpox vaccine, but they tend to be mild to moderate and go away within 7 days. Side effects may include:

- redness, changes in skin colour, bruising, swelling, warmth, itching, a hard spot or a small lump, or feeling sore where you had the needle
- feeling tired
- a headache
- a fever or chills
- body aches or sore joints
- pain in your arms or legs
- not feeling hungry or not wanting to eat (poor appetite)
- feeling sick to your stomach (nausea)

At least 1 out of 100 people who got this vaccine reported 1 or more of these side effects. In some cases, it is unknown if the vaccine caused these side effects.

It is important to stay at the clinic for 15 minutes after your vaccine. Some people may have a rare but serious allergic reaction called anaphylaxis. If anaphylaxis happens, you will get medicine to treat the symptoms.

It is rare to have a serious side effect after a vaccine. Call Health Link at 811 to report any serious or unusual side effects.

## What rare events have been reported after getting mpox vaccine?

There have been reports of myopericarditis (an inflammation of both the heart muscle and lining around the heart) after other vaccines that protect against smallpox. However, no cases of myopericarditis after mpox vaccine have been reported.

It is not known if having a history of myocarditis (inflammation of the heart muscle) or pericarditis (inflammation of the lining around the heart) after getting mpox vaccine or another smallpox vaccine puts you at higher risk of having these rare events. Talk to your healthcare provider before getting mpox vaccine if you have had these rare events after getting a smallpox vaccine or mpox vaccine.

## How can I manage side effects?

- To help with soreness and swelling, put a cool, wet cloth over the area where you had the needle.
- There is medicine to help with a fever or pain. Check with your healthcare provider if you are not sure what medicine or dose to take. Follow the directions on the package.
- Some people with health problems, such as a weak immune system, must call their healthcare provider if they get a fever. If you have been told to do this, call your healthcare provider even if you think the fever is from the vaccine.

## What if I had or am getting another type of vaccine?

Mpox vaccine can be given at the same as most other vaccines. Talk to your healthcare provider if you have had any other vaccines in the last 6 weeks.

## Who should not get mpox vaccine?

You may not be able to get this vaccine if:

- You have an allergy to any part of the vaccine.
- You had a serious or unusual side effect after this vaccine or one like it.
- You have previously been diagnosed with an mpox infection.

If you have allergies or have had a side effect from this vaccine in the past, check with your healthcare provider before you get mpox vaccine.

Although you can get the vaccine if you have a mild illness such as a cold or fever, you should stay home until you are feeling better to prevent spreading your illness to others, unless you have been exposed to mpox. If you have been exposed, you should get the vaccine right away.

You can get the vaccine if you have eczema (atopic dermatitis – a skin condition that makes your skin red and itchy). People with eczema are more likely to have serious side effects with other smallpox vaccines, but this has not been reported with mpox vaccine. If you have eczema and get mpox vaccine, you may be more likely to have common vaccine side effects or your eczema could get worse. Talk to your healthcare provider if you have questions.

There is more to learn about mpox vaccine and certain groups of people. Talk to your healthcare provider **before** you get mpox vaccine if:

- You have a weak immune system (because of medicine you take or a health problem).
- You are pregnant or breastfeeding.
- You are under age 18 years.
- You have a history of myocarditis or pericarditis after getting smallpox vaccine or mpox vaccine.

## I have a fear of needles. How can I prepare for my immunization?

Many adults and children are afraid of needles. There are things you can do before, during, and after immunization to be more comfortable.



Scan the QR code, visit [ahs.ca/vaccinecomfort](https://ahs.ca/vaccinecomfort), or call Health Link at **811** for information.

## For more information about immunization



Call Health Link at **811**



Scan the QR code or go to [ahs.ca/immunize](https://ahs.ca/immunize)