

ABOUT MPOX

What is mpox?

Mpox (previously known as monkeypox) is a viral infection caused by the mpox virus, related to smallpox but usually less severe. Mpox can affect anyone regardless of gender or sexual orientation. Early identification, testing, and treatment helps stop mpox from spreading.

Symptoms

Symptoms typically start 3–21 days after exposure.

Early signs

- Fever, chills, headache
- Muscle aches, fatigue
- Swollen lymph nodes

Rash and lesions

- Flat spots that become raised, filled with fluid, then crust over
- Can appear on the face, hands, genitals, or throughout the body
- Lesions may be painful or itchy
- Some people may have only a few lesions or mild symptoms



How mpox spreads

Close physical contact with someone who has mpox, including:

- Intimate or sexual contact (oral, anal, or vaginal sex)
- Touching lesions, rashes, or body fluids
- Hugging, kissing, or prolonged face-to-face contact
- Contact with contaminated items such as clothing, bedding, or towels used by someone with mpox.
- Transmission can also occur from pregnant parent to baby during pregnancy or birth.
- The virus can enter the body through broken skin, the respiratory tract, or mucous membranes (eyes, nose, mouth).

Get tested

- Testing helps confirm diagnosis and prevent further spread.
- Mpox can look like other conditions (e.g., herpes, syphilis, chickenpox), so lab testing is needed.
- If you have unexplained rashes or sores, especially after close contact with someone who has mpox, seek medical care immediately.

Get Free Testing & Condoms

Find testing sites in Cook County



Request free condoms



Cook County DEPT. of
Public Health

A division of Cook County Health

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Having an STI doesn't define you.

Getting tested and treated are a normal part of health care.

Get vaccinated

The JYNNEOS vaccine helps prevent mpox and is recommended for:

- People exposed to mpox
- Individuals at higher risk (e.g., multiple sexual partners, men who have sex with men, healthcare workers handling orthopoxviruses)
- Vaccinations can be given before or shortly after exposure to reduce disease severity.

Get both doses of the FREE mpox vaccine. It's never too late to vaccinate. Mpox vaccines may be found for free through some organizations in Cook County. Even if you got the first shot already, you can still get the second shot for stronger protection against mpox and mpox symptoms.

Get treated

- Most cases of mpox are mild and can be managed with supportive care, including rest, hydration, and pain control.
- Antiviral treatment (such as tecovirimat [TPOXX]) may be recommended for people at higher risk for severe disease or with severe symptoms, as directed by a healthcare provider.
- Pain relief options may include warm baths, topical treatments for skin discomfort, and over-the-counter pain medications.
- Isolate until all lesions have healed, scabs have fallen off, and new skin has formed to help prevent transmission.

Learn more

For more information and to find mpox vaccination and testing, visit:

bit.ly/PreventMPOXCookCounty.

Protect yourself and others

- Avoid close contact with people who have a rash or symptoms of mpox.
- Do not share bedding, clothing, or personal items with someone who is infected.
- Practice safer sex: Use condoms and consider limiting the number of sexual partners during outbreaks.
- Have open conversations with partners about symptoms and exposure risks.
- Wash hands frequently and clean/disinfect surfaces.
- If you develop symptoms, self-isolate and avoid close contact with others until evaluated by a healthcare provider and cleared according to public health guidance.

Follow-up for reportable STIs

Most STI infections, including mpox, are reportable infections. This means it's likely that health department staff will reach out to you if your test results are positive. They do this to:

- Ensure you've been treated appropriately
- Provide you with complete information
- Collect a brief sexual history and possible exposure timeline
- Help stop the spread of infection in the community

Your personal information is protected under HIPAA regulations, and everything you share is completely confidential.