

What should I know about mpox?

Mpox is a contagious disease spread through close physical contact. People who get sick usually do not need to visit a hospital and recover in 2-4 weeks.

While the overall risk of infection is low in King County, case reports are increasing. Anyone who has been in close contact with someone who has mpox is at risk.

A person is at higher risk for infection if they have sexual or close, intimate contact with multiple or anonymous partners, or visit places where there is skin-to-skin contact.

If you develop symptoms, talk to a medical provider immediately and avoid sex or other close intimate contact until you have been evaluated.

What are the symptoms of mpox?



The main symptoms of mpox are **rash and sores**. These usually appear 1-3 weeks after exposure.



Photo Credit: NHS England High Consequence Infectious Diseases Network

Rash and sores could be on the genitals and anus, or on other parts of the body. They are infectious and usually last 2-4 weeks.

People may also develop flu-like symptoms:

- Swollen lymph nodes
- Fever
- Exhaustion
- Headache and muscle aches

How does mpox spread?

Mpox is contagious and spreads through:

- Direct contact with mpox rash/sores
- During sex through skin-to-skin and other intimate contact
- Touching shared items (such as clothing and bedding) that have been used by someone with mpox
- Close contact with saliva or droplets through kissing and other face-to-face contact

Most recent cases in King County have been among men who reported sexual or close intimate contact with other men, sometimes with anonymous or multiple partners.

Who can get vaccinated now?

Mpox vaccine can help to prevent disease or make it less severe. Public Health is working with healthcare providers to offer vaccine at no cost to those at **high risk of recent exposure**.

This approach aims to help slow the spread of the disease, especially for people who may have been exposed but may not have symptoms yet.

Contact your healthcare provider immediately if you think you have been exposed.

How to lower your risk

Having sex or close physical contact with multiple or anonymous people can put you at higher risk for mpox while it is spreading in the community.

People can also consider these steps to decrease risk:

- Talk to close contacts about any recent illness and be aware of sores or rashes, including on the genitals and anus.
- Limit the number of sex and intimate contact partners.
- Avoid gatherings with skin-to-skin contact. If you attend a gathering, avoid coming into contact with rashes or sores you see on others and minimize skin-to-skin contact when possible.

If you have symptoms, or have been in contact with someone who has mpox:

- Visit a medical provider for an evaluation and testing
- Cover the area of the rash with clothing
- Wear a mask
- Avoid sex and other close skin-to-skin contact with others until you can be evaluated

If you don't have a medical provider or insurance, call: 1-800-756-5437. Patients with symptoms can also visit:

Sexual Health Clinic at Harborview

908 Jefferson St, 11th Floor

Seattle, WA 98104

Open Mon, Wed, Thu, Fri 8:00am – 3:00pm, and Tue 9:30am – 3:00pm.