



## Mpox: information sheet for category 2 contacts

You have been given this information sheet because you have been in contact with someone who has an illness called mpox. Because of this, there is a risk that you could develop mpox.

It can take up to 21 days to develop symptoms after you had contact with the person who has mpox. This means that for 21 days after the day you were last in contact with someone who has mpox, you should take action to protect your health and the health of others around you.

### **What you need to do now**

Take the following actions to help prevent the spread of mpox to others and so that if you develop the infection, it can be identified quickly. This will protect the health and safety of you, your family and anyone else that you may have contact with. Mpox can be a mild illness which resolves by itself without treatment, but young children, pregnant women or those with a weakened immune system may be more likely to have a more serious infection.

Follow these actions for 21 days from your last contact with the person who has mpox.

### **Avoid close contact with others**

Avoid skin-to-skin contact with other people. This includes intimate contact (including kissing, cuddling or other skin-to-skin contact) and sexual activity.

Where possible, avoid any close contact with children aged under 5, pregnant women, or those who have a weakened immune system. You should avoid contact with these people both within your household and others outside of your household. If you have close contact with these groups as part of your job, your employer or occupational health team should carry out a risk assessment to see if you can continue to attend work as normal, if you need to be redeployed, or if you should not come into work for the 21 days since your last contact with someone who has mpox.

If you need to get health or dental care, discuss this with the health or dental facility staff before attending. Let them know that you are a contact of someone who has mpox. If you become seriously unwell and require urgent medical attention, telephone 999 and tell them that you have been in contact with someone with mpox.

You are advised to not travel outside of the UK.

## Check yourself for symptoms

It can take between 5 to 21 days from contact with someone who has mpox for symptoms to develop. The symptoms of mpox can be similar to other infections, such as chickenpox. Symptoms can include:

- fever (a high temperature) of 37.8 degrees Celsius (°C) or higher
- headache
- muscle aches
- backache
- swollen glands – these could be in your neck, groin or under your arms
- chills
- exhaustion
- joint pain
- rash

The rash is made up of lesions (spots, blisters or ulcers). It usually appears 1 to 5 days after the first symptoms and can be on any part of the body. This includes the palms of the hands, soles of the feet, mouth, genitals and anus. It starts as raised spots, which turn into small blisters filled with fluid or pus. These blisters can turn into ulcers and eventually form scabs which later fall off.

Check yourself daily for any symptoms of mpox, using a mirror to check for lesions in areas which may be hard to see. It is important to check regularly for any lesions, as some people may develop a milder illness with only a small number of skin lesions (in some cases genital lesions only), and no other symptoms.

Regularly [check if you have a fever](#) (a high temperature) using a thermometer, if you have one. Signs that you have a high temperature include your chest or back feeling hotter than usual, or other symptoms such as shivering (chills), sweating, or warm, red skin (this may be harder to see on black or brown skin).

## What to do if you develop symptoms

If you develop any of the symptoms listed above in the 21 days since you last had contact with the person who had mpox, you should stay at home and stay away from other people (self-isolate) straight away. Phone NHS 111 and tell them about your contact with someone who has mpox and your symptoms. It is important that you do this if you have any symptoms, however mild, and in particular any signs of a rash (even if it is only one or two spots). The person that you talk to will arrange for you to have an assessment to see whether you have mpox.

If you are concerned about your symptoms or they are getting worse, then you should contact NHS 111 and tell them that you have been in contact with someone with mpox. If you become seriously unwell and require urgent medical attention, telephone 999 and tell them that you have been in contact with someone with mpox.

## **Mpox vaccine**

As you have not had direct or very close contact with someone who has mpox, you will not routinely be offered a vaccine. However, in some specific circumstances you may be offered a vaccine to prevent you from becoming very sick from mpox. If this is the case, your health protection team will have discussed this with you. The vaccine is not 100% effective and so you may still develop symptoms (though these are likely to be milder). You should still report any symptoms that you develop, however mild, to your mpox point of contact as you could still pass mpox on to others.

## **How mpox spreads**

Mpox does not spread easily between people unless there is close contact. Spread between people may occur through:

- direct contact with rash, skin lesions (spots, blisters or ulcers) or scabs, including during sexual contact, kissing, cuddling or other skin-to-skin contact
- contact with bodily fluids such as saliva, snot, mucus or semen or vaginal fluids
- contact with clothing or linens (such as bedding or towels) or other objects and surfaces used by someone with mpox

It is possible that mpox may spread between people through close and prolonged face-to-face contact such as talking, breathing, coughing, or sneezing close to one another. However, there is currently limited evidence about this.

## **More information about mpox**

[UK Health Security Agency: Mpox background information](#)

[World Health Organization: Mpox factsheet](#)