



## Mpox: information sheet for category 3 contacts

You have been given this information sheet because you have been in close 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. If you develop any symptoms of mpox in the 21 days, stay at home and 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.

### **Avoid close contact with other people**

The people who would be most likely to catch mpox from you if you go on to develop mpox are the people that you live with and people you have sex with. You should therefore avoid close contact (including skin-to-skin contact) with other people in your household, and avoid sexual contact with other people, to reduce the chance of passing mpox on to them if you develop symptoms.

It is also important to avoid close contact with children aged under 5 (where possible; see information below), pregnant women, or those who have a weakened immune system. You should avoid close contact with these people both within your household and others outside of your household.

Take the following actions to reduce the chance of passing on mpox to other people:

- sleep in a separate room from other people in your household if possible

- do not share a bed or bedding with other people
- avoid skin-to-skin contact with other people – this includes intimate contact (including kissing, cuddling or other skin-to-skin contact) and sexual activity
- use your own toothbrush, towels, razors and washcloths
- do not share food and drink with other people
- cover your mouth and nose with disposable tissues when you cough or sneeze – dispose of tissues as usual with your household waste, then clean your hands with soap and water or alcohol hand rub
- clean your hands frequently throughout the day, by washing with soap and water – use a separate soap dispenser and hand towel from the rest of your household, or clean with alcohol handrub

You are advised to not travel outside of the UK.

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 there are children in the household**

If you have a child or children in your household, or a child in your household is a close contact of someone with mpox, you should take precautions to minimise direct skin to skin contact with them as far as you can, while ensuring that you are meeting their care and wellbeing needs. Children who are contacts should always be given the care and contact they need to ensure their wellbeing.

If you have received this information sheet because your child has had close contact with someone who has had mpox, you may be advised to keep them off school or nursery to prevent the spread of mpox. Your local health protection team will tell you if this is the case, after discussing with you about the child and the school or nursery they attend.

If you are pregnant or breast-feeding contact your clinician for further advice.

### **Attending work**

If your work involves direct contact with people who are at higher risk of serious infection if they catch mpox (children aged under 5, pregnant women, or those who have a weakened immune system) you will need to discuss with your line manager whether you can undertake a different role for the 21 days from your last contact with the person who has mpox. If this is not possible, you are likely to be asked to exclude from work for this period.

If your job does not involve direct contact with those at higher risk, there are no restrictions on your work as long as you do not have any symptoms.

### **Cleaning your home**

Keep your home clean using your usual household cleaning products such as disinfectants and bleach. Dilute the cleaning products following the manufacturer's instructions if necessary.

## 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 away from other people (self-isolate) straight away. Get in touch with 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 healthcare service that you talk to will arrange for you to have an assessment to see whether you have mpox.

## Mpox vaccine

Depending on when you had contact with someone with mpox, you may be offered a vaccine to prevent you from becoming very sick from mpox. The vaccine is not 100% effective and so you may still develop symptoms (though these are likely to be milder). You should still get

in touch with NHS 111 if you develop symptoms of mpox, however mild, 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](#)