

# Mpox (monkeypox) Vaccine

## Public Health – Fact Sheet

Immunization is one of the most important accomplishments in public health. Immunizations help in eliminating and controlling the spread of infections. Vaccines help your immune system to recognize and fight bacteria and viruses that cause disease.

### What is mpox?

Mpox, formerly known as monkeypox, is a rare disease caused by infection with the monkeypox virus. It can cause a painful rash, enlarged lymph nodes, fever and other symptoms. Monkeypox virus is related to the smallpox virus. But it typically causes less serious disease. Anyone can get infected and spread mpox if they come into close contact with someone who has the virus. This is regardless of sex, race, gender or sexual orientation.

### What are the symptoms?

Symptoms are typically flu-like. These can include fever, headache, muscle aches, chills, exhaustion and swollen lymph nodes. Days after these symptoms appear, a rash may appear anywhere on the body. The rash is typically found on the face or mouth, palms of the hand, soles of the feet and the genital area. The rash may also start on the area of contact (e.g., genital area) without further spread on the body. Mpox is usually a mild illness and most people recover on their own within two to four weeks. However, severe disease and death can occur.

### How does it spread?

In countries where mpox is commonly found in animals, the virus is believed to mainly spread to humans through direct contact with an infected animal (i.e., via a bite or scratch, or through bush meat preparation). In 2022–2023 a global outbreak of mpox occurred, primarily spread through close contact with infected people.

Mpox does not generally spread easily between people. Human-to-human transmission can occur with:

- direct contact with mpox lesions or bodily fluids, including through sex,
- prolonged face to face contact by respiratory droplets, or
- indirect contact with contaminated surfaces and materials, such as bedding and clothes.

A person may be infectious up to four days before the onset of symptoms and until all skin lesions have resolved.

### What is the mpox vaccine?

Imvamune® is a vaccine that protects against mpox. It is approved for use in adults 18 years and older. Although Imvamune® is called the smallpox or mpox vaccine, it does not contain the smallpox or mpox viruses. It contains a weakened form of the vaccinia virus. Because the vaccinia virus is closely related to the smallpox and monkeypox virus, the vaccine can protect against both infections.

The mpox vaccine can be used in two different ways to try to prevent infection:

- before getting exposed to the virus in someone at high risk of exposure (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis – PrEP); or
- after being exposed to the virus, but before infection occurs (Post-Exposure Prophylaxis – PEP).

Infection could still occur even after vaccination. But if infection does occur, the infection is likely to be less severe compared to an unvaccinated person.

### How is the vaccine administered?

Imvamune® is administered by a needle in the upper arm. It is usually provided as a series of two needles (i.e., two doses) at least 28 days apart. If it has been more than 28 days since your first dose, you can still receive a second dose.

The mpox vaccine can be given at the same time or at any time before or after other live or inactivated vaccines (e.g., Influenza, MMR).

### Who should get the mpox vaccine?

People who are at greater risk of exposure to mpox can receive Imvamune® for pre-exposure prophylaxis. To find out if you are eligible, please visit: [manitoba.ca/health/publichealth/diseases/mpox.html](https://manitoba.ca/health/publichealth/diseases/mpox.html)

Public health officials will also follow-up with individuals who may have had contact with someone with mpox. They may recommend that these people receive the mpox vaccine.

Vaccination used for pre- or post-exposure to the monkeypox virus may help prevent the disease or make it less severe. For post-exposure prophylaxis, the sooner the vaccine is given after exposure, the more effective it is at protecting against infection. It can be given up to 14 days after exposure.

### Who should NOT get the mpox vaccine?

You should not get the vaccine if you have had a major reaction to a previous dose of the mpox vaccine, including a severe allergic reaction or myopericarditis (inflammation of the heart muscle and lining of the heart). If you are allergic to any of the contents of the vaccine, please speak with your health care provider.

For information about any of the vaccine ingredients, please review the vaccine manufacturer's product monograph or speak with your health-care provider.

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Someone with a high fever should not be immunized. In discussion with your health-care provider, the vaccine can still be given if the illness is mild, like a common cold.

## Information for specific populations

Speak with your health-care provider about the risks and benefits of vaccination, if you:

- are younger than 18 years of age;
- are pregnant, planning to become pregnant or breastfeeding; or
- have a weakened immune system caused by disease or medical treatment (e.g., cancer).

There is limited information on the use of Imvamune<sup>®</sup> among these individuals. Except for those who are breastfeeding, these individuals also have a higher risk of severe illness if infected with mpox. Your health-care provider knows your health history best and can provide you with information to help guide your decision to get the mpox vaccine or not.

## Possible side-effects of the mpox vaccine

The following side-effects are very common, are generally mild or moderate, and go away about a week after vaccination:

- pain, redness and swelling at the injection site
- feeling tired
- headache
- nausea
- muscle pain

Although no confirmed cases of myopericarditis have been associated with Imvamune<sup>®</sup>, previous smallpox vaccines have been associated with myopericarditis. The signs and symptoms can include shortness of breath, chest pain, or the feeling of a rapid or abnormal heart rhythm. **If you experience any of these symptoms, go to the nearest emergency department or health centre.**

It is important to stay in the clinic for 15 minutes after getting any vaccine because there is a rare possibility of a severe allergic reaction. This can include hives, difficulty in breathing or swelling of the throat, tongue or lips. **Call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department for immediate attention should any reaction occur after leaving the clinic.**

**Report any serious or unexpected adverse reactions to a health-care provider, or call Health Links – Info Santé at 204-788-8200 or 1-888-315-9257 (toll free in Manitoba)**

## Your record of protection

All immunizations are recorded in a person's immunization record in Manitoba's Immunization Registry.

This registry enables:

- your health-care provider to find out which immunizations you or your child(ren) have received,
- the production of immunization records or notification to you about overdue vaccines,
- public health officials to monitor how well vaccines work in preventing disease.

You can get your immunization record by submitting a request online via [forms.gov.mb.ca/immunization-update-request/](https://forms.gov.mb.ca/immunization-update-request/). Your immunization record will be mailed to you. You may also be able to get a copy by:

- contacting your local public health office;
- checking if your local medical clinic or physician's office can provide it to you; or
- asking at a local nursing station or health centre.

For a listing of public health offices please visit: [manitoba.ca/health/publichealth/offices.html](https://manitoba.ca/health/publichealth/offices.html).

The Personal Health Information Act protects your information and/or that of your child(ren). You can have your personal health information and/or that of your child(ren) hidden from view from health care providers. For more information, please refer to [manitoba.ca/health/publichealth/surveillance/phims.html](https://manitoba.ca/health/publichealth/surveillance/phims.html) or contact your local public health office to speak with a public health nurse.

## For more information

For more information about mpox or the mpox vaccine, talk to your health-care provider.

You can also contact Health Links – Info Santé in Winnipeg at 204-788-8200 or 1-888-315-9257 (toll free in Manitoba). Or visit:

### Manitoba Government:

[manitoba.ca/health/publichealth/diseases/mpox.html](https://manitoba.ca/health/publichealth/diseases/mpox.html)

### The Public Health Agency of Canada:

[canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/mpox.html](https://canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/mpox.html)