

6 September 2023

## Mpox (monkeypox) update: Information for primary care providers

### Key points

- Cases of mpox continue to be reported in Australia in 2023.
- Clinicians are reminded to be alert to the signs and symptoms of mpox, particularly in returned travellers, or those who have had sex with someone who has travelled overseas.
- Mpox is a notifiable condition in the ACT: if you diagnose or have reasonable clinical suspicion of mpox in a patient, notify ACT Health by phone on (02) 5124 9213.
- Mpox vaccination is available for eligible people at certain ACT vaccination clinics.

### Current situation

Mpox continues to circulate in many countries, particularly in Asia and Western Pacific regions. 15 mpox cases have been detected to date this year in Australia, including one case in the ACT and nine cases in NSW. Most of these recent cases have reported recent international travel or sexual contact with people who have recently travelled overseas.

Mpox cases have predominantly occurred among gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men, however cases are not limited to this group and anyone with close or prolonged physical contact with someone with mpox can be exposed.

### Clinical presentation

Symptoms of mpox occur up to 21 days after being exposed. Cases often have a vesicular, pustular or ulcerated rash at the site of the infection, often in the genital area, but can involve any part of the body. Painful proctitis can also be a symptom of mpox, even in the absence of any visible lesions. Prodrome of fever, malaise, myalgia and lymphadenopathy may occur.

### If you suspect mpox

- Initiate appropriate [infection prevention and control measures](#). For patients considered at high risk of mpox, wear a surgical mask, gown and gloves while examining and taking swabs.
- Collect lesion material from **two** morphologically distinct lesions using a green viral swab. Alternate swabs include flocculated swab in VTM or swab in liquid Amies.
  - Request mpox PCR and consider testing for differentials such as herpes simplex virus and syphilis.
  - Consider testing for other sexually transmitted infections, such as chlamydia, gonorrhoea, syphilis and HIV.
  - Specimens should be sent directly to ACT Pathology for testing. Please contact the on-call Clinical Microbiologist via Canberra Hospital switch on (02) 5124 0000 to facilitate testing.
- Notify ACT Health by phone on (02) 5124 9213, preferably while the patient is still with you.
- Your patient may need to take precautions to avoid transmission to other household members and to sexual partners – ACT Health will provide advice and support.

### Vaccination

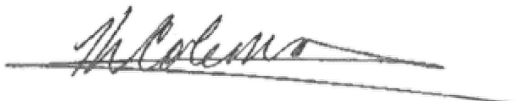
In the ACT, people eligible to receive the mpox vaccine are:

- Sexually active men (cis and trans) who are gay, bisexual, or have sex with other men
- Partners of the people above
- Sex workers

Eligible people, including those without a Medicare card, can contact mpox vaccination clinics directly to book an appointment. Further information on accessing mpox vaccination is available at the [ACT Health mpox webpage](#).

### More information

- ACT Health: [Mpox \(monkeypox\) | Health \(act.gov.au\)](#)
- Australian Government: [Mpox \(monkeypox\) | Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care](#)
- Infection Prevention and Control Expert Group: [Interim guidance on monkeypox for health workers](#)



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