



BC Centre for Disease Control  
Provincial Health Services Authority

# Mpox (Monkeypox) Vaccine

## What is the mpox (monkeypox) vaccine?

The mpox (monkeypox) vaccine (Imvamune®) protects against infection from the virus that causes mpox. If you are exposed to the virus, the vaccine can prevent illness or make the illness less severe. The vaccine is approved by Health Canada.

## Who should get the vaccine?

If you are at increased risk of exposure to the mpox virus or you have been identified by public health as being a close contact of someone with mpox, it may be recommended that you get the vaccine. The vaccine is given by injection as two doses, at least 4 weeks apart.

It is important to keep a record of all immunizations received.

## What are the benefits of the vaccine?

The vaccine can prevent mpox or make the illness less severe. This makes it less likely for you to pass mpox to others.

## What are the possible reactions after the vaccine?

The vaccine is very safe. It is much safer to get the vaccine than to get mpox. The vaccine cannot give you mpox. Common reactions to the vaccine may include soreness, redness, swelling, itching and a lump where the vaccine was given. These reactions are more common and last longer when the vaccine is given under the top layer of skin (intradermally) instead of into the fatty tissue just under the skin (subcutaneously). Skin may also become temporarily discolored when the vaccine is given intradermally. Other reactions include tiredness, headache, fever, chills, muscle or joint

soreness, nausea and loss of appetite. Reactions to the vaccine are more common in people with atopic dermatitis (a type of eczema).

If you have concerns about any symptoms you develop after receiving the vaccine speak with your health care provider or call 8-1-1 for advice.

Acetaminophen (e.g. Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (e.g. Advil®) can be given for fever or soreness. ASA (e.g. Aspirin®) should not be given to anyone under 18 years of age due to the risk of Reye Syndrome.

For information on Reye Syndrome, see [HealthLinkBC File #84 Reye Syndrome](#).

It is important to stay in the clinic for 15 minutes after getting any vaccine because about 1 in a million people can get a life-threatening allergic reaction called anaphylaxis. This may include hives, difficulty breathing, or swelling of the throat, tongue or lips. Should this reaction occur, your health care provider is prepared to treat it. Emergency treatment includes administration of epinephrine (adrenaline) and transfer by ambulance to the nearest emergency department. If symptoms develop after you leave the clinic, call 9-1-1 or the local emergency number.

Always report serious or unexpected reactions to your health care provider.

## Who should not get the vaccine?

Speak with your health care provider if you have had a life-threatening allergic reaction to:

- A previous dose of a smallpox or mpox vaccine
- Any part of the mpox vaccine including ciprofloxacin, gentamicin or chicken protein

There is no need to delay getting immunized because of a cold or other mild illness. However, if you have concerns speak with your health care provider.

### Are there other considerations to getting the vaccine?

Speak with your health care provider if you:

- Have an immune system weakened by disease or medical treatment
- Are pregnant or breastfeeding

### What is mpox?

Mpox is a disease caused by the mpox virus. It is usually a mild illness and most people recover on their own after a few weeks. Children, pregnant women and people with weak immune systems may have a more serious illness. It can take up to 21 days to develop symptoms of mpox after being exposed to the virus.

### What are the symptoms of mpox?

Symptoms of mpox occur in 2 stages. In the first stage, symptoms can include fever, chills, intense headache, swollen lymph nodes, back pain, muscle soreness and weakness or lack of energy. Other symptoms may include sore throat, cough, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea.

The second stage of the disease begins about 1 to 3 days after the first stage symptoms appear. Symptoms of the second stage include a rash that often starts on the face or legs and arms. It can also appear on other parts of the body such as the hands, feet, mouth, genitals and anus. The rash changes in appearance over time from raised spots to small fluid filled blisters or sores which will form a scab and fall off. Symptoms of mpox may last 2 to 4 weeks.

Some people experience symptoms differently. For example, they may not have first-stage symptoms but will develop sores. They may have sores on only one or a few parts of the body.

### How is mpox spread?

Mpox can be spread by touching the mpox sores, fluid from the sores, or items such as bedding, clothes or towels that have the mpox virus on them. It can also be spread through close face-to-face contact when a person with mpox coughs or sneezes. A person with mpox can spread the virus to others while they have symptoms and until all of the scabs on their skin have fallen off and new skin has formed.