

Getting tested for mpox: What you need to know

24 January 2023

When to seek testing:

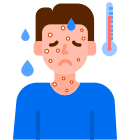
1 If you are experiencing symptoms consistent with mpox, including an unexplained skin rash, rash inside your mouth or genital area, lesions, or swollen lymph nodes.

Or

2 If you are a close contact of someone who has mpox. Close contact can mean being face-to-face (such as talking); skin-to-skin (such as touching or vaginal/anal sex); mouth-to-mouth (such as kissing); or mouth-to-skin contact (such as oral sex).

and

You are experiencing symptoms such as fever (>38.5°C), headache, myalgia (muscle pain/body aches), back pain, profound weakness or fatigue.



If you don't have symptoms but think you have been exposed talk to your health care provider for more information

Testing is one vital tool in helping end the outbreak. Knowing if you have the virus can help you protect others in your community. It means that you can get appropriate medical care including pain management and management of infection and can also help facilitate access to social support and counselling if you need it.

Testing- step-by-step:

1. You will be placed in a private room in your health care facility and your health care provider will be wearing appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) for sample collection.
2. A sample will be collected by swabbing your lesions and surrounding skin (lesion material is the best sample type and most likely to give an accurate test result). Your health care provider may swab more than one of your lesions. If you do not have lesions other sample types might be collected, including a swab from the back of your throat (oropharyngeal swab) or from your genital and anal area (genital, anal and rectal swabs).
3. Your health care provider will then send your sample to a laboratory where it will be tested for the monkeypox virus. Other possible causes of your lesions may be tested for. Currently the only reliable test is lab-based.
4. Depending on your local context the lab will either contact you directly or the results will be returned to your health care provider.
5. If you receive a positive result: your health care provider can advise you on recovering in a facility or at home and help refer you to the relevant local services including medical support, social support and counselling.
6. If you receive a negative result: your health care provider may advise you to monitor your symptoms and get retested.



What to do while I wait for my test results:

- Self-isolate if you can and avoid close contact with other people, cover all your lesions with fabric/clothing and wear a well-fitted mask.
- Follow the guidance from your health care provider.
- Practice hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette (covering your nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing).



What happens with my results?

- Have an open conversation with a trusted health worker if you have any concerns about how your personal information is managed during the testing process.
- Results should only be communicated with you, confidentially.
- You can choose to tell who you want, but you should inform people who you have had close contact with so they can be aware and get tested too.



Information about mpox is evolving rapidly. Advice may change as we learn more. Check www.who.int for the most up-to-date information.

The WHO website has some great tools to help:

- This [infographic](#) provides advice for recovering from mpox at home
- [Here is some specific advice](#) for gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men
- [This Q&A](#) has the latest answers to the most commonly asked questions

