

# Mpox

This information sheet contains information relevant for clade I mpox in children

**Mpox is an illness caused by a virus that does not spread easily between people. It is commonly passed on through contact with the blisters or lesions of someone who has mpox. There are 2 types of mpox, known as clade I and clade II. Clade I is increasing in parts of Africa but the risk of it spreading widely in Aotearoa New Zealand remains very low.**



## Signs and symptoms – what you can see and feel

Mpox symptoms can start with a flu-like illness (including fever, swollen glands, muscle aches, chills or tiredness).

Most people with mpox develop a rash or other skin changes, known as 'lesions'. Lesions are spots, bumps, blisters or sores that can affect any part of the body.

Some people with mpox will not develop visible lesions but may have other symptoms.



## How does mpox spread?

Mpox does not spread easily between people. The ways mpox can spread includes:

- direct contact with mpox lesions. Clade I appears to spread more easily (than clade II) through physical contact with household members
- direct contact with bedding, clothing, towels and some other objects used by someone with mpox.

People with mpox are infectious and can pass on the virus from when they first develop symptoms, up until their lesions crust, dry and fall off. This will usually take about 2 to 4 weeks.



## Immunisation

If your child gets mpox or they are a close contact of someone with mpox, your public health service team will discuss their eligibility for immunisation with you.

To find out more about the mpox vaccine, visit [healthnz.govt.nz/mpoxvaccine](https://healthnz.govt.nz/mpoxvaccine), or call the Vaccination Helpline free on 0800 28 29 26 (8:30am to 5:00pm Monday to Friday).



## Seeking health advice

If your child is at risk of mpox and they develop symptoms, please seek medical advice. You can contact their GP, hauora or healthcare provider, or call Healthline on 0800 611 116, anytime 24/7 for free health advice and information. **In an emergency, call 111.**

Your child's information is protected under the Health Information Privacy Code.

If your child needs to be tested, mpox is diagnosed by swabbing lesions.



## People at highest risk of serious illness

People who have a weakened immune system, are pregnant, and infants and young children are at higher risk of serious illness from mpox.

If your child is in one of these groups and you think they have been exposed to mpox, seek advice from your healthcare provider as soon as possible or contact your public health service team at [healthnz.govt.nz/national-public-health-service](https://healthnz.govt.nz/national-public-health-service)



## What happens if my child gets clade I mpox?

Unlike clade II mpox, if your child tests positive for clade I mpox, they will need to isolate (stay at home) until all their lesions have healed and they are no longer infectious – this is because clade I may spread more easily to others than clade II.

Your public health service team will be in regular contact with you to support you and your child and provide advice on managing their symptoms and the precautionary measures they need to take to prevent spreading mpox to other people. They will also let you know when your child can leave isolation.

To protect others in your household from getting mpox, your child will be asked to:

- cover their lesions
- not have physical contact with others, particularly people at higher risk of serious illness from mpox
- wear a well-fitting mask when around others in their household (if they can tolerate it).

For some people with mpox, lesions can become itchy or painful. Your healthcare provider can prescribe pain relief if your child needs it.

Occasionally people with mpox can become very sick. If your child's symptoms are getting worse, contact their healthcare provider for advice.

If your child needs to attend a healthcare setting, advise staff they have clade I mpox. Cover any lesions and get them to wear a mask during their visit (if they can tolerate it).



## What do close contacts need to do?

If your child has direct contact with mpox lesions, they may be considered a 'close contact'. You should contact your public health service team at [healthnz.govt.nz/national-public-health-service](https://healthnz.govt.nz/national-public-health-service) for support and advice if they have not contacted you already.

Close contacts who have been exposed to mpox are eligible for a free post-exposure vaccine. If given within 14 days after contact with someone with mpox, the vaccine will help lower your child's risk of developing mpox and reduce the severity of their symptoms if they become infected.

You should monitor your child for symptoms for 21 days from when they last had contact with someone with mpox. Your child will only be asked to isolate (stay at home) if they develop symptoms.

If your child develops any symptoms, contact their healthcare provider and tell them your child is a close contact of a person with mpox and is developing symptoms. They will arrange for your child to be reviewed and tested.



## Protecting your child and others

To reduce the risk of your child getting or passing on mpox they should:

- make sure they feel healthy and have no mpox symptoms before having close physical contact with others
- not have close physical contact with someone who has mpox or mpox symptoms
- not have direct contact with the clothing, bedding or towels of someone with mpox.



### For more information

- Visit the Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora website [healthnz.govt.nz/mpox](https://healthnz.govt.nz/mpox) and [healthnz.govt.nz/mpoxvaccine](https://healthnz.govt.nz/mpoxvaccine)
- Visit the Healthify | He Puna Waiora website [healthify.nz/mpox](https://healthify.nz/mpox)
- Call Healthline on **0800 611 116**, anytime 24/7 for free health advice and information. You can choose to speak with a Māori clinician if you are calling between 8am and 8pm. Interpreter services and NZ Relay support are also available.
- Call the free Vaccination Helpline on **0800 28 29 26**. Support is available Monday to Friday, between 8.30am and 5.00pm. You can choose to speak with a Māori or Pacific advisor, or a disability advisor. Interpreter services and NZ Relay support are also available.
- For people living or visiting rurally, you can contact a doctor after usual business hours by calling Ka Ora Telecare for free on **0800 2 KA ORA (0800 252 672)** or by visiting [kaora.co.nz](https://kaora.co.nz)
- Free NZ Relay Services are available at [nzrelay.co.nz](https://nzrelay.co.nz) if you are Deaf, hard of hearing, deafblind or have speech communication difficulties.
- A dedicated helpline for Disability health support is available Monday to Friday, between 8.00am and 5.00pm. Call free on **0800 11 12 13** or text **8988** for help and information or visit [healthpoint.co.nz/disability-helpline](https://healthpoint.co.nz/disability-helpline)
- If you need mental health advice or support, call free or text **1737** anytime.