

Community Alert: Mpox

October 8, 2025

The Washington State Department of Health (WA-DOH) and Public Health – Seattle & King County (PHSKC) are requesting that community members remain alert for cases of mpox (formerly “monkeypox”) due to:

1. Rising cases of clade II mpox
2. Recent detection of clade I mpox virus in wastewater in Pierce County

Mpox, the infection caused by the mpox virus (MPXV), has been circulating at low levels in Washington State since the 2022 global outbreak of clade II mpox. We have recently seen an **increase in clade II mpox cases in the Puget Sound Area** associated with sexual and intimate contact among gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men, transgender people, and non-binary people. **In September 2025, there were 36 cases diagnosed in King County, the largest number of new diagnoses in a month since the end of the 2022 outbreak.**

WA-DOH has also been monitoring for a potentially more severe strain of mpox (clade I) since 2024. **On September 24th, 2025, WA-DOH in partnership with Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department (TPCHD) and the University of Washington (UW), detected clade I mpox virus in Pierce County’s wastewater.** However, at this time, there have been no reported cases of clade I mpox, and the risk to the community remains low.

Recommendations

1. **Get vaccinated if you have not already done so.** Gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men (MSM), transgender people, and non-binary people are encouraged to complete the two-dose series for optimal effectiveness against the mpox virus. Young people, ages 18-25, and other MSM who were not previously vaccinated for mpox during the 2022 outbreak are especially advised to get vaccinated.
2. **Get tested if you are showing signs of an mpox infection.** The virus often causes a rash, which may look like bumps on your skin, blisters, or ulcers. Some people have a flu-like illness before they develop a rash. Infections with the strain of mpox virus identified in the U.S. outbreak are rarely fatal, and most people recover in 2-4 weeks. Get tested for HIV, syphilis, gonorrhea, and chlamydia as well.
3. **If you've been diagnosed with mpox, talk to your primary care provider.** While there is no treatment approved specifically for mpox, your provider may suggest other options that may prove to be beneficial for your health and well-being while recovering from mpox.
4. **Inquire about HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and doxycycline pre-exposure prophylaxis (DoxyPEP)** with your primary care provider if you are a gay or bisexual man, or the sex partner of gay or bisexual men.