**Key messages**

**Mpox cases are increasing in Victoria**

**Be alert for mpox**

**Number of cases**

* Mpox cases are continuing to increase in Melbourne and regional Victoria.
* Have a low threshold for testing sexually active people with any symptoms.
* Promote vaccination in all eligible people at risk of mpox infection.
* **306** mpox notifications in Victoria since mid-April.
* Almost all cases have been in gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men (GBMSM).
* A small number of female cases have been diagnosed in Victoria.
* Clinicians should remain aware of the possibility of mpox infection amongst other groups, particularly sexually active people with compatible symptoms.
* All cases in Victoria to date have been Clade IIb.
* 25 people have been hospitalised.
* There is currently an outbreak of a potentially more severe strain (Clade Ib) in several African countries. Cases have been identified outside of Africa, and there is a risk of importation to Australia.

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| **Epi curve of Mpox notifications in Victoria, 1 April – 6 October 2024** | | | | | | | |
| 40 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 30 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 20 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 10 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 0 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Apr 10, 2024 | May 08, 2024 | Jun 05, 2024 | Jul 03, 2024 | Jul 31, 2024 | Aug 28, 2024 | Sep 25, 2024 |
|  |  |  |  | **Week** |  |  |  |

* Presentations can vary and may include 1-2 or disseminated lesions (particularly in the anogenital region and mouth but can occur anywhere on the body) and proctitis (anorectal pain without visible lesions).
* Not all cases have a prodrome (fever, sore throat, myalgia, arthralgia and lymphadenopathy). In people with prodrome only, ask them to return for testing if they develop further mpox symptoms.
* Mpox can mimic other conditions, including sexually transmitted infections (STIs) such as herpes, syphilis, molluscum contagiosum, chlamydia and gonorrhoea, as well as haemorrhoids and tonsilitis.

**Test all sexually active people with symptoms.**

* Test if symptomatic, regardless of sexual orientation, vaccination status or travel history.
* Those most at risk of mpox include GBMSM (including those who identify as heterosexual), sex workers, and partners of these groups.

**If testing for herpes simplex virus (HSV), test for mpox**

* Wear appropriate PPE while collecting samples. This includes gloves, eye protection, gown and surgical mask.
* Request mpox PCR test on appropriate samples (such as swabs of rash lesion material, anorectal, throat or nasopharyngeal swabs). Mark as “urgent”.
* Urgently notify any suspected or confirmed cases to the Department of Health, within 24 hours on 1300 651 160.
* Advise patients to cover lesions and abstain from sexual activity while awaiting the result. Advise to wear a mask if oral lesions, respiratory symptoms or pharyngitis present. If positive, the Local Public Health Unit will provide further advice.

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| **Vaccination** |
| * 2 doses of the mpox vaccine are required for optimal protection, given 28 days apart. * Check GBMSM have had both doses of vaccine and encourage vaccination for those at risk. * Mpox is not currently recommended as a travel vaccine, unless already eligible per ATAGI guidelines. * Vaccine can be ordered by GPs via Onelink online or patients can access through local mpox immunisation providers. |
| **Further information on Clade Ib currently circulating in Africa** |
| **If mpox is suspected in a returned traveller or someone who has had contact with a returned traveller from affected countries in Africa, contact your** [**Local Public Health Unit immediately.**](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/local-public-health-units) <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/local-public-health-units> |

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| **Resources for further information and support:** | |
| * [health.vi](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/infectious-diseases/mpox-monkeypox)c – Mpox <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/infectious-diseases/mpox-monkeypox> * [Better Health Channel - Mpox](https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/mpox) <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/mpox> * [Better Health Channel - Positive Cases](https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/mpox-advice-for-cases) <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/mpox-advice-for-cases> * [Australian STI Management Guidelines - Mpox](https://sti.guidelines.org.au/sexually-transmissible-infections/monkeypox/) <https://sti.guidelines.org.au/sexually-transmissible-infections/monkeypox/> * [Local Immunisation Providers](https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/mpox-immunisation-providers) <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/mpox-immunisation-providers> | If you have any questions, please contact us! Public Health Protection, Practice and Response Branch, Department of Health [infectious.diseases@health.vic.gov.au](mailto:infectious.diseases@health.vic.gov.au)  1300 651 160 |