



NEWS RELEASE

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IDPH Reports Mpox Cases are Rising in Chicago Area Ahead of Summer

With 24 Confirmed Cases Reported in Chicago and Suburbs, IDPH Urges Vaccinations for Mpox Ahead of Festival Season

CHICAGO – The Illinois Department of Public Health announced that cases of mpox (formerly known as monkeypox) are on the rise in Chicago and suburban Cook County and is urging those at-risk for mpox exposure to take precautions and to get vaccinated, if they are not already, [ahead of the spring and summer festival and Pride season](#). Since March, 24 mpox cases have been confirmed with an additional two probable cases. All cases were among symptomatic men, a majority of whom had received two doses of the JYNNEOS vaccine.

“We are seeing an increase in mpox cases over the past month – a reminder that the threat of mpox is not over,” said IDPH Director Dr. Sameer Vohra. “We saw during last year’s outbreak that we have the tools to prevent mpox. We are asking Illinoisans at-risk for mpox to take precautions to reduce their exposure and get vaccinated – either for the first time or to complete the two-dose course. Mpox vaccine remains an important tool in stopping the spread of mpox and may help prevent serious illness.”

Since the outbreak in 2022, mpox has primarily been transmitted through close, sustained physical contact, almost exclusively associated with sexual contact. This is why it is important for those at risk to stay up to date on sexual health care. IDPH encourages individuals to be open with their medical providers about their practices and activities that could increase their risk of getting mpox, in order to get timely and appropriate testing, treatment and prevention services, including vaccines. Even though mpox infections have been primarily reported among gay, bisexual, nonbinary, and transgender people, any person - regardless of sexual orientation - may be at-risk for contracting and spreading mpox.

Vaccinations for those who could benefit from mpox vaccines continue to be one of the most important protective measures. Cases among vaccinated people can still occur, but **people who have completed their two-dose JYNNEOS vaccine series typically experience less severe symptoms and hospitalizations than those who have not**. The CDC found that [mpox cases](#)

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[were 14 times higher](#) among unvaccinated males compared with those who received at least a first vaccine dose. No additional doses of vaccine are currently recommended for those previously infected by mpox or those who have already had two doses of mpox vaccine.

- **Mpox vaccination is recommended for anyone living in Illinois who:**
 - Had skin-to-skin or intimate contact (e.g., household members with close physical contact or intimate partners) with someone diagnosed with mpox
 - Has had any of the following in the past six months:
 - Sex at a commercial sex venue (like a sex club or bathhouse)
 - Sex related to a large commercial event or in a geographic area (city or county for example) where mpox virus transmission is occurring
 - Sex in exchange for money or other items
 - Lives with HIV, especially persons not in HIV care or not regularly taking HIV medications
 - Is eligible for or is currently taking PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) to help prevent infection with HIV
 - Is a sexually active bisexual, gay, non-binary, or transgender person.
 - Sexual partners of those cited above or individuals who anticipate meeting the above criteria in the future
- Especially consider getting vaccinated if you:
 - Met recent partners online, or at clubs, raves, sex parties or saunas
 - Were diagnosed with an STI in the past six months
- Do get both doses of the mpox vaccine if you have not been vaccinated and benefit from the vaccine or received only one so far. **The best protection against mpox occurs two weeks after the second shot, so plan ahead!**
- People who are vaccinated should continue to avoid close, skin-to-skin contact with someone who has mpox.
- If you have symptoms of mpox, visit a trusted health care provider to get tested, even if you have been vaccinated.

Warmer months are full of events that celebrate the LGBTQ+ community. [Prepare for this Pride season](#) by staying healthy before, during and after these celebrations.

You may search for mpox vaccine locations [HERE](#). For more information, visit the Chicago Department of Public Health's [mpox dashboard](#) and IDPH's [mpox dashboard](#).

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