

**From:** Dr. Janice Fitzgerald, Chief Medical Officer of Health  
**To:** Health care practitioners in Newfoundland and Labrador  
**Re:** Update on mpox  
**Date:** August 16, 2024

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A surge in cases of mpox have been noted in a growing number of countries within Africa and the Democratic Republic of Congo. On August 14, 2024, the World Health Organization declared mpox as a public health emergency of international concern. Recently, provincial wastewater testing surveillance has revealed two trace detections for the mpox virus, suggesting the possibility of low levels of mpox activity. The Department of Health and Community Services (HCS), in collaboration with jurisdictional counterparts and the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), continue to monitor the epidemiology of mpox and the potential for cases provincially. Currently, there are no cases of mpox reported in NL. We ask that health care practitioners maintain vigilance in the detection of potential mpox infections to help reduce spread of the virus.

### **Suspected case**

A person of any age who presents with one or more of the following:

1. An unexplained acute rash AND has at least one of the following signs or symptoms
  - Headache
  - Acute onset of fever ( $>38.5^{\circ}\text{C}$ ),
  - Lymphadenopathy (swollen lymph nodes)
  - Myalgia (muscle and body aches)
  - Back pain
  - Asthenia (profound weakness)
  - Fatigue
  - Pharyngitis (sore throat)
  - Proctitis (rectal inflammation/pain)
2. An unexplained acute genital, perianal or oral lesion(s)

Symptoms typically occur zero to five days before the appearance of lesions but may also occur after lesions appear.

### **Probable case**

A person of any age who presents with an unexplained acute rash or lesion(s) AND has one or more of the following:

1. Has an epidemiological link to a probable or confirmed monkeypox case in the 21 days before symptom onset, such as
  - face-to-face exposure, including health workers without appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)
  - Direct physical contact, including sexual contact; or contact with contaminated materials such as clothing or bedding

2. Reported travel history to or residence in a location where monkeypox is reported in the 21 days before symptom onset.

### **Confirmed case**

A person who is laboratory confirmed for monkeypox virus by detection of unique sequences of viral DNA either by real-time polymerase chain reaction (PCR) and/or sequencing.

In accordance with the Provincial Public Health Protection and Promotion Act Regulations, mpox is identified as a communicable disease that **must be reported in writing**, within 24 hours of laboratory or clinical diagnosis, whichever occur first, as per the [Notifiable Disease List and Notification Form](#).

For information on testing requirements, please see information from the [NL Public Health Laboratory](#).

In NL, pre and post exposure prophylaxis with Imvamune vaccine continues to be available for individuals considered to be high-risk for mpox, including:

- Individuals 18 years of age or older who are two-spirit, non-binary, transgender, intersex or gender-queer, or cisgender individuals who are gay, bisexual, pansexual, and/or men who have sex with men AND meet at least one of the following criteria:
  - Have or are planning to have sex with one or more partners or are in a relationship where at least one of the partners may have other sexual partners
  - Have received a diagnosis of a sexually transmitted infection in the last year
  - Have attended, worked, or volunteered in sex-on-premises venues or may be planning to do so, whether in or outside of the province
  - Have had anonymous sex (e.g., using hookup apps) recently or may be planning to
  - Are a sexual contact of an individual who engages in sex work
- Sexual partners 18 years of age and older of individuals who meet the above criteria
- People 18 years of age and older who engage in, or plan to engage in, sex work regardless of gender, sex or sexual orientation
- People 18 years of age and older who engage in sex tourism regardless of gender, sex or sexual orientation. Individuals planning to travel internationally should consult their healthcare provider on vaccination at least 4 to 6 weeks prior to travel particularly to countries with ongoing mpox transmission.

Series completion with two doses of Imvamune vaccine four weeks apart is important in increasing protection against mpox. Individuals that meet the criteria above can book immunization appointments for first and second doses through Public Health Offices. Please refer to the following links for contact information within the appropriate zones:

[Central zone](#)

[Eastern zone](#)

[Labrador Grenfell zone](#)

[Western zone](#)

For more information related to mpox, please refer to the [provincial website dedicated to mpox](#) or [PHAC website](#). HCS will continue to share updates as they become available.