



BC Centre for Disease Control
Provincial Health Services Authority

Monkeypox Vaccine

What is the monkeypox vaccine?

The monkeypox vaccine (Imvamune®) protects against infection from the virus that causes monkeypox. If you are exposed to the virus, the vaccine can prevent illness or make the illness less severe. The vaccine is approved by Health Canada.

Who should get the vaccine?

If you are at increased risk of exposure to monkeypox or you have been identified by public health as being a close contact of someone with monkeypox, it may be recommended that you get the vaccine. The vaccine is given by injection as one dose. A second dose of vaccine may be recommended 4 weeks after the first dose if you are at ongoing risk of exposure.

You should not get any other vaccines until 14 days after you get the monkeypox vaccine.

It is important to keep a record of all immunizations received.

What are the benefits of the vaccine?

The vaccine can prevent monkeypox or make the illness less severe. This makes it less likely for you to pass monkeypox to others.

What are the possible reactions after the vaccine?

The vaccine is very safe. It is much safer to get the vaccine than to get monkeypox. The vaccine cannot give you monkeypox. Common reactions to the vaccine may include soreness, redness, swelling, itching and a lump where the vaccine was given. Other reactions include tiredness, headache, fever, chills, muscle or joint soreness, nausea and loss of appetite. Reactions to the

vaccine are more common in people with atopic dermatitis (a type of eczema).

If you have concerns about any symptoms you develop after receiving the vaccine speak with your health care provider or call 8-1-1 for advice.

You might be contacted to participate in safety monitoring for monkeypox vaccine. For more information, go to <https://bcchr.ca/vec/research/canvas-monkeypox>.

Acetaminophen (e.g. Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (e.g. Advil®) can be given for fever or soreness. ASA (e.g. Aspirin®) should not be given to anyone under 18 years of age due to the risk of Reye Syndrome.

For information on Reye Syndrome, see [HealthLinkBC File #84 Reye Syndrome](#).

It is important to stay in the clinic for 15 minutes after getting any vaccine because about 1 in a million people can get a life-threatening allergic reaction called anaphylaxis. This may include hives, difficulty breathing, or swelling of the throat, tongue or lips. Should this reaction occur, your health care provider is prepared to treat it. Emergency treatment includes administration of epinephrine (adrenaline) and transfer by ambulance to the nearest emergency department. If symptoms develop after you leave the clinic, call 9-1-1 or the local emergency number.

Always report serious or unexpected reactions to your health care provider.

Who should not get the vaccine?

Speak with your health care provider if you have had a life-threatening allergic reaction to:

- A previous dose of a smallpox or monkeypox vaccine
- Any part of the monkeypox vaccine including ciprofloxacin, gentamicin or chicken protein

There is no need to delay getting immunized because of a cold or other mild illness. However, if you have concerns speak with your health care provider.

Are there other considerations to getting the vaccine?

Speak with your health care provider if you:

- Have an immune system weakened by disease or medical treatment
- Are pregnant or breastfeeding

What is monkeypox?

Monkeypox is a disease caused by the monkeypox virus. It is usually a mild illness and most people recover on their own after a few weeks. Children, pregnant women and people with weak immune systems may have a more serious illness. It can take up to 21 days to develop symptoms of monkeypox after being exposed to the virus.

What are the symptoms of monkeypox

Symptoms of monkeypox occur in 2 stages. In the first stage, symptoms can include fever, chills, intense headache, swollen lymph nodes, back pain, muscle soreness and weakness or lack of energy. Other symptoms may include sore throat, cough, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea.

The second stage of the disease begins about 1 to 3 days after the first stage symptoms appear. Symptoms of the second stage include a rash that often starts on the face or legs and arms. It can also appear on other parts of the body such as the hands, feet, mouth, genitals and anus. The rash changes in appearance over time from raised spots to small fluid filled blisters or sores which will form a scab and fall off. Symptoms of monkeypox may last 2 to 4 weeks.

Some people experience symptoms differently. For example, they may not have first-stage symptoms but will develop sores. They may have sores on only one or a few parts of the body.

How is monkeypox spread?

Monkeypox can be spread by touching the monkeypox sores, fluid from the sores, or items such as bedding, clothes or towels that have the monkeypox virus on them. It can also be spread through close face-to face contact when a person with monkeypox coughs or sneezes. A person with monkeypox can spread the virus to others while they have symptoms and until all of the scabs on their skin have fallen off and new skin has formed.