

What's up with Mpox?

GPs and community crucial to Mpox response



WAAC launches new health campaign in response to the latest outbreak of Mpox cases reported around Australia, with over 80 new cases being recorded in 2024 so far. Read more about what Mpox is and how you can help stop the spread.

It was a general practitioner who identified the [first case of mpox in Australia in May 2022](#). Mpox typically begins with a prodromal illness and rash within 2-4 days, with other common symptoms including fever, swollen lymph nodes, fatigue, headache, and muscle aches.

The rash progresses from flat sores to blisters, scabbing over, and can appear anywhere on the body. Symptoms usually last 2-4 weeks. By the end of 2022, there were 144 cases nationally, including seven in Western Australia. The outbreak predominantly impacted gay and bisexual men (GBMSM); however, it was largely contained through effective community mobilisation.

As [Cornelisse and colleagues](#) have reflected, "Australia's community-led HIV organisations mobilised rapidly, utilising expertise of working with GBMSM to address HIV."

In 2023, there were only 26 recorded mpox cases in Australia. However, there has been a re-emergence in the first half of 2024 with over 80 cases diagnosed.

The recent outbreaks have principally affected Victoria and Queensland, with a high proportion of cases being locally acquired. At the time of writing, there have been no mpox cases recorded in Western Australia this year.

Up-to-date surveillance and monitoring data can be accessed through the [National Communicable Disease Surveillance Dashboard](#).

A [new chapter on mpox](#) has been added to the Australian Immunisation Handbook. It recommends primary preventive vaccination (PPV) against mpox for at-risk groups, including sexually active GBMSM, sex workers with at-risk clients, people living with HIV at risk of mpox exposure, and laboratory personnel working with orthopoxviruses.

It may also be considered for healthcare workers and sexual partners of GBMSM, sex workers, and people living with HIV. Post-exposure preventive vaccination (PEPV) is advised for high-risk contacts identified within the past 14 days.

JYNNEOS is generally preferred for both PPV and PEPV because of its safety and ease of administration. The vaccination schedule consists of two doses, spaced at least 4 weeks apart.

People at higher risk of mpox and/or experiencing severe mpox-related illness, can access the vaccine free of charge, and without a Medicare card. Find out more about [vaccination in WA here](#). Online [mpox vaccination training](#) is available through ASHM.

Data published as part of the national [TraX study report](#) show that:

- At baseline (October 2022), 22% of a sample of people considered at high risk of mpox infection were unvaccinated, 50% had one vaccination, and 28% had two vaccinations.
- By 21 April 2024, unvaccinated participants decreased to 9%, those with one vaccination fell to 11%, and those with two vaccinations rose to 80%.

It is unclear whether these findings are representative of the level of two-

It takes **two** to protect you from **mpox**.

Two doses of mpox vaccine is all it takes to protect you and your community.

dose coverage in Western Australia because TraX only included a small Western Australian sample (n=23; 0.8%).

The [2023 GBQ+ Community Periodic Survey Report for Western Australia](#) found that less than one-third of respondents reported having heard a lot about mpox, highlighting the importance of messaging and health promotion.

WAAC has launched a new social media campaign which encourages GBMSM to ensure that they have received two vaccine doses. Clinicians and community organisations are encouraged to follow and share WAAC's mpox assets to raise community awareness:

- <https://www.facebook.com/weareWAAC>
- <https://www.instagram.com/wearewaac/>

WAAC is also:

- Sponsoring mpox awareness advertisements on the LGBTQIA+ social networking app Grindr.
- Offering mpox vaccinations as part of its [weekly STI outreach clinic](#) at Perth Steam Works.
- Continuing to provide mpox vaccinations at its [West Perth M Clinic](#).

Through a partnership approach focused on the education of clinicians and the empowerment of community

members, WAAC intends to once again be at the forefront of the prevention and control of mpox in Western Australia.

Additional resources for community:

- [Information for people diagnosed with mpox](#)
- [HealthyWA](#)
- [WAAC website](#)

Additional resources for clinicians
The Western Australian Department of Health offers several resources for clinicians including [a Quick Guide](#) for mpox assessment, testing, prevention and control, and more detailed guidance through the [Silverbook](#).

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