

MEDIA STATEMENT

22 January 2025

Mpox continues to circulate in Australia, with the ACT observing an increase in mpox cases this month. Meridian is encouraging people at risk of mpox to get vaccinated, know the symptoms to look out for and get tested if symptoms develop.

Sexually active men (cis and trans) who are gay, bisexual or have sex with other men, their partners and sex workers are eligible to receive the mpox vaccine free in the ACT – no Medicare card is required. A consultation or administration fee may apply.

Two doses of mpox vaccine spaced at least 28 days apart is the best way to help prevent mpox and reduce the chance of severe symptoms. Getting vaccinated reduces the likelihood of getting severe symptoms and helps limit the spread of mpox.

Even if you are fully vaccinated you may still be at risk of infection. It's still important to check for symptoms and take steps to protect yourself and others.

Early signs of mpox may include fever, chills, headache, muscle aches, fatigue, and swollen lymph nodes. These are often followed by development of painful lesions, sores or rashes.

Mpox is spread through close contact with someone who has mpox such as skin-to skin contact during intimate or sexual contact. It may also spread by touching contaminated objects such as clothing, towels or furniture. It can also spread through prolonged face-to-face contact with a person who has mpox, but this is rare.

If you develop symptoms, stay home, avoid contact with others and phone your GP clinic. You can also call the Canberra Sexual Health Centre during business hours on (02) 5124 2184 to book an appointment.

In the ACT, ACT Health, Canberra Health Services and Meridian continue to work together to ensure impacted individuals receive access to healthcare, supports and treatment.

There are several clinics across Canberra offering mpox vaccinations, including:

- Canberra Sexual Health Centre*
- Interchange Health Co-operative
- Ochre Medical Centre Bruce*
- Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services

*After hours appointments available.

Learn more about mpox, including vaccination clinic locations and booking details, by visiting www.meridianact.org.au/mpox

Quotes attributable to Meridian CEO, Joshua Anlezark

“We encourage sexually active cis and trans men who are gay, bisexual or have sex with other men, their partners and other eligible people to get vaccinated for mpox.”

“Even if vaccinated, it’s important for people stay alert for mpox symptoms and if symptoms develop, they should contact their GP or Canberra Sexual Health Centre.”

‘Our communities have consistently shown excellent health-seeking behaviour, and by staying informed, getting vaccinated, and seeking care when needed, we can continue to protect ourselves and support each other.’

Quotes attributable to ACT Health spokesperson, Dr Sally Singleton, ACT Deputy Chief Health Officer

“ACT Health has received an increase in notifications of mpox in recent weeks. This is in the context of an increase in mpox notifications nationally in 2024,” said ACT Deputy Chief Health Officer, Dr Sally Singleton.

“This is a timely reminder for those who are eligible to get vaccinated, to know the symptoms to look out for, and if you develop any symptoms seek medical care and get tested.

“Vaccination will reduce your likelihood of getting severe symptoms. Even if you are fully vaccinated you may still be at risk of infection. It’s still important to check for symptoms and take steps to protect yourself.”

Statement ends

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