

To: Nova Scotia Health Care Practitioners

From: Dr. Jennifer Cram, Medical Officer of Health, Provincial

Date: August 26, 2024

Re: ***Mpox cases in Canada and World Health Organization (WHO) Public Health Emergency of International Concern***

On August 14th, 2024, the WHO declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern in response to a growing multi-country outbreak of a new variant (Clade Ib) in Central African countries. Separately, there have been new cases of Clade IIb mpox in Canada in 2024, with majority of cases reported in Ontario. Clade IIb is the same virus detected since 2022 in mpox outbreaks in Canada. While Nova Scotia has not reported any cases in 2024, and the overall risk of importation of clade I into Canada has been assessed by the Public Health Agency of Canada to be low to moderate, these two separate situations from different clades of the mpox virus may increase the likelihood of new cases in Nova Scotia.

Nova Scotia mpox testing can detect both clade I and II and positive specimens are referred to the National Microbiology Laboratory for clade determination. Additionally, Halifax's wastewater is routinely monitored for mpox through Public Health Agency of Canada's wastewater monitoring program. The most recent report as of August 2nd, 2024, did not suggest signs of mpox in Halifax's wastewater.

General Information on Mpox and Clinical Case Management

- Mpox is a notifiable disease per [It's the Law](#); report suspected or confirmed cases immediately to Public Health.
- Mpox is a viral illness that does not spread easily but requires close skin-to-skin contact with lesions, scabs, body fluids, and direct contact with personal items used by someone with mpox. Mpox can also be spread by respiratory droplets during prolonged face-to-face contact and from an infected pregnant person to the fetus.
- Symptoms may start with a flu-like prodrome, and then progress to a rash or lesions in a single location or all over the body.
- While cases in Canada have largely occurred in men who report sexual contact with other men, anyone who is exposed can get mpox.
- The highest risk for acquiring mpox is currently out-of-province travel or contact with someone who has traveled to an area reporting infections.
- Given high rates of co-infections, it is recommended clinicians broadly test for STBBIs if suspecting mpox.
- Individuals who are immunocompromised, pregnant, and children under 12 are at increased risk of severe disease if infected with mpox.
- People can reduce the risk of an mpox infection by receiving vaccine, having fewer sexual partners, using barrier protection, avoiding close contact with anyone feeling unwell, practicing good hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette, and disinfecting high-touch surfaces and objects.

Pre and Post Exposure Immunization

To reduce the likelihood of infection, Nova Scotia publicly funds a two-dose series of Imvamune vaccine to groups identified at high risk, with doses separated by at least 28 days.

Imvamune is available as a pre-exposure immunization to anyone who meets the current criteria:

1. Pre-exposure immunization for individuals 18 years and older at increased risk of mpox:
 - a. Men who have sex with men (MSM) who meet one or more of the following criteria:
 - i. Have more than one sexual partner
 - ii. Are in a relationship where at least one of the partners has other sexual partners
 - iii. Have had a confirmed bacterial sexually transmitted infection acquired in the last year
 - iv. Have engaged in sexual contact in sex-on-premises venues.
 - b. Sexual partners of individuals who meet the criteria above.
 - c. Sex workers regardless of gender, sex assigned at birth, or sexual orientation.
 - d. Staff or volunteers in sex-on-premises venues where workers may have contact with fomites potentially contaminated with mpox.
 - e. Those who engage in sex tourism regardless of gender, sex assigned at birth, or sexual orientation.

Imvamune is also recommended as a post-exposure immunization for high-risk contacts of mpox cases. Nova Scotia Public Health assesses the need for post-exposure immunization on a case-by-case basis.

Accessing Imvamune

Since May 2023, Imvamune has been accessible as a publicly funded vaccine to physician offices and some pharmacies, like other vaccines for Nova Scotians at high-risk of vaccine-preventable diseases. Please submit a Vaccine Requisition by confidential email or fax as per usual process. For questions regarding the high-risk vaccine process, including delivery and pick-up questions, please contact publichealthvaccineorders@nshealth.ca

Additional Resources and Information

Please refer to the following resources for additional information on mpox and the current situation:

- [DHW Mpox Public Health Case and Contact Management](#)
- [Public Health Agency of Canada Mpox \(monkeypox\): For health professionals](#)
- [Public Health Agency of Canada Mpox \(monkeypox\): Current Situation](#)

General information for healthcare providers on Imvamune is available through the [Department of Health and Wellness](#) as well as in the [product monograph](#). For a full listing of available vaccines and eligible populations, please refer to the [DHW policy on public funded vaccines for those at high-risk of vaccine-preventable diseases](#).