

# Mpox (monkeypox) – October 2024

## Key messages for clinicians in the NEPHU catchment

### Local transmission of mpox (monkeypox) is now occurring in Victoria.

- Be alert for mpox acquired both locally and from overseas
- **Anyone can get mpox**, but those most at risk include sexually active gay, bisexual or other men who have sex with men (MSM).



### Consider testing all sexually active patients presenting with compatible symptoms, regardless of sexual orientation, vaccination status or travel history.

Presentations can vary and may include 1-2 or disseminated lesions (particularly in the anogenital region and mouth), and proctitis.

- Wear appropriate PPE when collecting samples.
- Collect a dedicated swab of lesions for mpox PCR, mark as “urgent – send to VIDRL” and send via your normal pathology provider.
- A nasopharyngeal swab for mpox PCR should also be collected.
- Consider testing for concurrent STIs as symptoms can overlap.



### Any suspected or confirmed cases of mpox must be immediately notified to the Department of Health on 1300 651 160.

- Advise your patient to cover lesions and abstain from sexual activity while awaiting the result. Advise to wear a mask if oral lesions, respiratory symptoms or pharyngitis present.
- Inform your patient that a public health officer may contact them if mpox is diagnosed.
- Inform the Department of health if your patient is a returned traveller from countries in Africa affected by Clade 1b, or someone who has had contact with a returned traveller from these countries.



### Encourage mpox vaccination of eligible patients

- Mpox vaccination reduces risk of transmission and disease severity
- The mpox vaccine is administered subcutaneously
- Two doses of vaccine are required for optimal protection
- The vaccine is freely available to order via the [OneLink](#) portal.
- In Victoria, the mpox vaccine (JYNNEOS®) is available free-of-charge for people who meet the eligibility criteria (see [Victorian Department of Health Mpox website](#))

See the [Victorian Department of Health Mpox website](#) for more information.

Thank you for your assistance.

Together, we can help protect the health of our community.

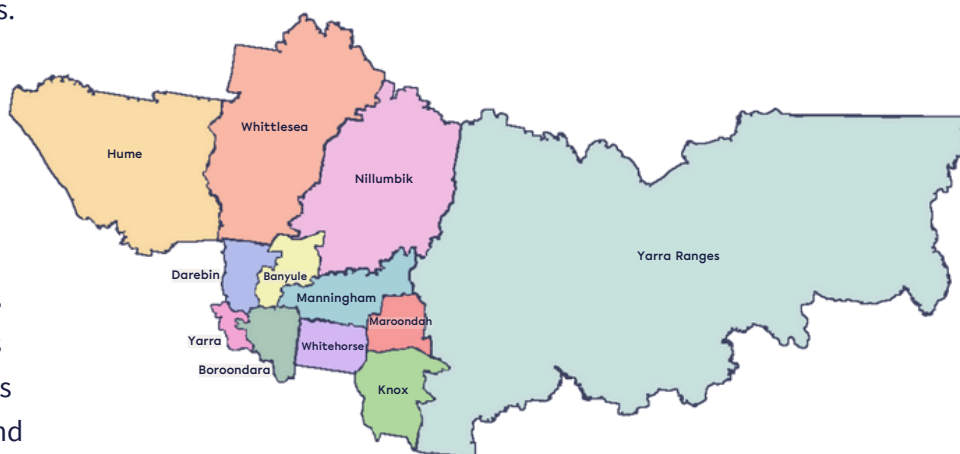
## About NEPHU

The **North Eastern Public Health Unit (NEPHU)** works within a network of Local Public Health Units (LPHUs) across Victoria and with the Victorian Department of Health (DH) to deliver public health interventions to the people of twelve local government areas (LGAs) in north and east Melbourne.

More information on NEPHU can be found at [www.nephu.org.au](http://www.nephu.org.au).

NEPHU now has accountability for the public health management of all notifiable conditions except tuberculosis, anaphylaxis and high lead levels. This includes all vaccine-preventable diseases, blood-borne viruses, sexually-transmissible infections, zoonoses, vector-borne diseases and enteric diseases, as well as antimicrobial resistant pathogens.

NEPHU is authorised to receive notifications of notifiable conditions from medical practitioners and laboratories. NEPHU will also undertake case management, manage outbreaks and lead local prevention actions in relation to notifiable conditions in collaboration with clinicians and other stakeholders.



All clinics and hospitals in Victoria have been geographically allocated to a LPHU. Your clinic or hospital is in the NEPHU catchment, which means NEPHU will work with you to co-ordinate public health responses to notifiable conditions, data collection, be available for public health related inquiries, and collaborate with you during outbreak investigations involving your facility.

## Key people at NEPHU

- Dr Annaliese van Diemen, Director
- Asmara Jammali-Blasi, Senior Manager Health Protection Operations
- Dr Katherine Ong, Senior Public Health Physician
- Dr Rehana Di Rico, Public Health Physician
- Dr Claire Gordon, Medical Specialist

## Contacts

- For Health Protection, Epidemiology and Public Health Medicine enquiries (including disease and outbreak management), email: [healthprotection.nephu@austin.org.au](mailto:healthprotection.nephu@austin.org.au)
- To report any individual cases or outbreaks of a notifiable infectious disease, condition or micro-organism, see the Victorian Department of Health's [Notifiable infectious diseases, conditions and micro-organisms](#) webpage.
- The notification phone number is **1300 651 160**.



*We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land and pay our respects to Elders past and present.  
We celebrate, value and include people of all backgrounds, genders, sexualities, cultures, bodies and abilities.*