

Thorne Harbour Health urges community vigilance following rise in mpox cases

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday 12 May – Thorne Harbour Health is encouraging gay, bi, and other men who have sex with men to consider mpox as part of their wellbeing routine this winter season, following a recent increase in cases nationally.

While more than 100 mpox cases have been reported across Australia since the start of the year, the majority of those cases have only occurred in the past six weeks across Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia.

“While our communities have done well to keep mpox cases down, the reality is that it hasn’t disappeared entirely. Unfortunately, this is the time of year when we have seen a spike in cases in both the 2022 and 2024 outbreak,” said Deputy Director of Health Promotion and Community Engagement, Caleb Hawk.

Thorne Harbour Health is encouraging anyone who hasn't had both doses of the mpox vaccine to incorporate it into their normal healthcare routine alongside sexual health checks and/or seasonal flu vaccinations.

“Many people book in for flu vaccines around this time of year. Our message is simple: if you haven’t had your mpox vaccine, or haven’t completed the second dose, ask about it while you’re there,” said Hawk.

“And if you see a suspicious spot or lesion, get it checked out. It is still possible to acquire mpox even if you’re fully vaccinated, but symptoms tend to be milder.”

“This is about keeping ourselves, our partners, and our communities safe without creating panic or shame around sex, socialising, or community connection.”

Mpox spreads primarily through close physical contact, including during sex, and symptoms can include fever, swollen lymph nodes, fatigue, and painful rashes or lesions. The vaccine remains one of the most effective tools available to reduce both severity of illness and risk of transmission.

Thorne Harbour Health is also reminding communities that mpox vaccines are free and available regardless of Medicare or visa status.

Further information on mpox symptoms, vaccination, and local clinic access is available via Thorne Harbour Health’s website.

ENDS

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