

Mpox

Preventing Transmission in Community Settings

ABOUT MPOX

Mpox (previously referred to as Monkeypox) is a disease caused by the mpox virus. It enters the body through broken skin (even if not visible), the respiratory tract, or the eyes, nose or mouth.



It usually causes mild symptoms that last from two to four weeks.



Some people may experience moderate or severe symptoms and will need to see their health care provider.



Vaccines are available for the prevention of mpox.

The most commonly reported symptoms have been:



Flu-like symptoms such as fever, chills, fatigue or body aches.



Skin lesions, such as sores or blisters, that can occur before or after flu-like symptoms.

A person is considered to be **INFECTIOUS** until there is **FULL HEALING** of the rash with formation of a **FRESH LAYER OF SKIN**.

Mpox can spread from person to person through:



Skin-to-skin contact, and close contact with lesions or body fluids, or respiratory droplets.



Exposure to towels, blankets, bedding or other items that contact skin and may have the virus on them.



Prolonged face-to-face interaction over several hours.

Preventing stigmatization

While most, but not all, recent infections are among men who identify as gay, bisexual or other men who have sex with other men, the virus can affect anyone through close person-to-person contact. **STIGMATIZING PEOPLE** because of a disease is **NEVER OKAY**. Anyone can get or pass on mpox, regardless of their sexuality.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU THINK SOMEONE HAS MPOX

While other people — including those living or working in the same household or community setting — may be at risk of infection, transmission from this type of contact is rare. If a staff member, volunteer, or resident has mpox, consider the following actions:

Contact a **HEALTH PROFESSIONAL**



Mpox must be clinically diagnosed by a health care provider. Please do not isolate or diagnose residents without consulting your local public health team.

- Individuals experiencing symptoms of mpox can be assessed to see if they need testing via their primary care provider, at sexual health clinics, or at an urgent primary care centre.
- Sexual health clinics can be found using the [clinic finder](#).

Provide **SUPPORT**

Please follow the advice below or contact the VCH CDC at 604.675.3900 for case-specific guidance:



If possible, provide individuals with their own room and bathroom until there is full healing of the rash with formation of a fresh layer of skin (typically takes two to four weeks).

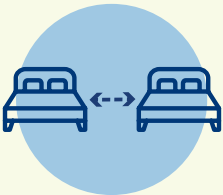
- Multiple residents who test positive for mpox can stay in the same room.
- Reduce the number of staff entering dedicated areas to only those who are essential.
- Manage waste from dedicated areas (e.g., handling, storage and disposal of soiled PPE, patient dressings, etc.). Consult your health authority before discontinuing isolation.



Ensure that individuals with mpox wear a well-fitting disposable mask over their nose and mouth, and cover any skin lesions.



Ensure individuals practice good hand hygiene.



If individuals cannot have their own room, provide them with bed space that is physically separate from other people. Use dividers or screens.



Individuals should not share towels, clothing, linens, eating utensils, etc.



If washrooms must be shared, provide wipes and encourage individuals to wipe down the washroom after use.



VCH CDC may work with you to identify people who might have been exposed to mpox and provide additional guidance.

HOW TO KEEP PEOPLE SAFE

Ensure access to **HANDWASHING**



Add signs to remind staff, volunteers and residents to wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds or use alcohol-based hand sanitizers, particularly around washrooms or places where people eat or drink.



Make available free soap and water or hand sanitizer with 70%-90% isopropyl alcohol.



Anyone who touches lesions or clothing, linens or surfaces that may have had contact with lesions should wash their hands immediately.

NOTE:

As the mpox virus can spread from contaminated surfaces to people, increased surface cleaning is a good idea when there is confirmed mpox in a congregate housing setting. You can kill the virus with:

- Household cleaners containing chloroxylenol.
- A 0.5% solution of household bleach (1 part bleach, 9 parts water).

Provide all staff, volunteers and residents with **UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION**

To minimize exposure to mpox, people should:

- Get a vaccine for mpox, if eligible. An mpox vaccine is available for two-spirit and transgender people, or cisgender men who self-identify as belonging to the gay, bisexual or other men who have sex with men community. Further information is available at <https://www.vch.ca/en/health-topics/mpox>
- Maintain good hand hygiene.
- Cover their mouth and nose with a tissue or use their elbow when coughing or sneezing.
- Self-isolate if they feel unwell or have any symptoms, or if they have been advised by public health to limit their contact with others.
- Practice safer sex. Using condoms during sexual activity is recommended for prevention of HIV and other STIs, but it may not fully protect against mpox exposure.

CLEAN and **DISINFECT** frequently



Clean high-touch surfaces in common areas (e.g., toilets, eating areas) at least twice in an eight-hour shift.



Encourage residents with mpox to change their own linens when possible.



Launder linens using regular detergent and hot water followed by machine (hot-air) drying. Contain and never shake out soiled laundry.



Cover mattresses with sheets, blankets or a plastic cover.



Wash used personal items such as utensils, plates, glasses, linens and towels in 60°C hot water with detergent, followed by drying with hot air until completely dry. Most domestic washers do not reach temperatures this high, so additional hot water can be added into the wash basin of a top-loading washer.



Minimize the use of fans, dry dusting, sweeping or vacuuming in shared spaces, as these can spread dried material from lesions.



Inform cleaning staff in advance about cleaning guidelines.

Provide appropriate **PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)** for **STAFF, VOLUNTEERS AND RESIDENTS**

The main exposure risk to staff is through direct contact with skin lesions or through contact with a person's clothing or linen that has been in contact with lesions. Staff should be provided with disposable gloves and a well-fitting mask for provision of care to individuals with mpox, or when handling laundry or cleaning.

ADAPTED FROM:

- <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/specific-settings/congregate.html>
- <https://www.healthylondon.org/our-work/homeless-health/monkeypox-guidance-for-homeless-and-inclusion-health-settings/>
- http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/Monkeypox/Monkeypox_2SGBTQ.pdf
- http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/Monkeypox/Guidelines_Events_Monkeypox.pdf