

MPOX: WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE SICK

About Mpox

Mpox (formerly known as monkeypox) is caused by infection with the mpox virus.¹ Most people with mpox will get a rash. This rash may look like pimples or blisters. Some people develop flu-like symptoms such as fever, swollen lymph nodes, muscle aches, and exhaustion.

Mpox can spread to anyone through person-to-person contact with someone who has mpox or an object that the person has touched. This includes breathing in particles (containing viruses) in the air that are spread when someone with mpox breathes, talks, sneezes, or coughs. Someone can spread mpox from the time their symptoms start until the rash has fully healed and a fresh layer of skin has formed.

Learn if You Have Mpox

If you think you have mpox:

- stay home and away from people and pets¹
- call your health care provider for medical advice.

Your health care provider may ask you to come to the clinic for mpox testing.

Treatment and Recovery

Most people with mpox recover fully without treatment within 2 to 4 weeks.²

Some people have a higher risk of severe illness. This includes people with weakened immune systems, under 1 year old, with certain skin conditions such as eczema, and who are pregnant or breastfeeding.

There is no treatment specifically for mpox.² However, some medicines may help you manage your symptoms. The type of treatment someone needs depends on how sick they get and if they are likely to get severely ill. In some cases, health care providers will prescribe medicine.

Talk with your health care provider about the best recovery plan for you.

Take Care of Yourself

- Cover all parts of the rash with gauze or bandages. This helps limit the spread of the rash to other areas of your body and to other people.²
 - Change your bandages by yourself while wearing disposable gloves. Afterward, place the used bandages and gloves in the trash and wash your hands.
- Do not pop, scratch, or shave the rash. This does not speed up recovery and could cause the rash to become infected. This can also spread the virus to other parts of your body and to other people.
- Do not wear contact lenses. This helps prevent the spread of the virus to your eyes.
- Keep the rash clean and dry when not bathing.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. This is especially important after direct contact with the rash.
- Eat healthy and get plenty of rest to allow your body to heal.

Manage Your Symptoms

- Use medicines like ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) and acetaminophen (Tylenol) to help manage pain.²
- Topical benzocaine/lidocaine gels can help with discomfort caused by the rash.
- Take oral antihistamines (Benadryl), use topical creams (such as calamine lotion or petroleum jelly), or soak in a warm bath to help with itching caused by the rash.
- For a rash in the mouth, rinse your mouth with salt water at least four times a day.

Prevent Spread to Others

Stay home alone if you have mpox symptoms. This includes staying home until your mpox rash has healed and a new layer of skin has formed.²

If you live with other people or are around others, follow the guidelines below:

- Stay in a room or area that keeps you away from other people and pets when possible.
- Use sheets, blankets, or tarps to cover furniture and other materials that cannot be easily disinfected or washed.
- Do not share items that you have worn or touched. This includes clothing, bed sheets, and eating utensils.
 - If this is not possible, the items should be cleaned thoroughly with soap (or detergent) and water after each use.³
- Use a separate bathroom.
 - If this is not possible, use a separate towel and disinfect all surfaces in the bathroom that were touched. This includes cleaning the countertop, toilet seat, and faucet. Clean surfaces with an EPA-registered disinfectant. (See the tip box below for more information.)
- If you need help changing your bandages, the person helping should wear disposable gloves and a well-fitting mask. Afterward, the person should place the used bandages and gloves in the trash and wash their hands.
- Wear a well-fitting mask when around other people. This should be done until the rash and all other symptoms have resolved.
- It is unknown if the mpox virus can be spread through breast milk. It is recommended to delay breastfeeding until you have recovered from mpox.⁴

Will Your Disinfectant Work Against Mpox?

Only some cleaning products will kill the mpox virus. Mpox is a tier 1 virus.³ Read the product's information to learn if it kills tier 1 viruses. If you cannot find this information on the product, type the product's EPA registration number into the following EPA webpage: www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/disinfectants-emerging-viral-pathogens-evps-list-q#evps. This webpage will tell you if the product kills tier 1 viruses.

Sources:

- 1) About mpox. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Updated April 18, 2024. Accessed August 15, 2024. <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/mpox/about/index.html>
- 2) What to do if you are sick. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Updated January 26, 2023. Accessed August 15, 2024. <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/mpox/if-sick/what-to-do.html>
- 3) Cleaning and disinfecting. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Updated August 31, 2023. Accessed August 15, 2024. <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/mpox/if-sick/cleaning-disinfecting.html>
- 4) Clinical considerations for mpox in people who are pregnant or breastfeeding. Updated June 11, 2024. Accessed August 15, 2024. <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/mpox/clinicians/pregnancy.html>

