Isolation Instructions for People with Monkeypox

This guidance is for people who have been diagnosed with monkeypox and people who are suspected of having monkeypox until they get their test results. Different guidance is available for people in healthcare settings or congregate settings, such as correctional facilities and homeless shelters.

It is important to follow this guidance to protect others and reduce the spread of monkeypox.

How monkeypox spreads

The monkeypox virus spreads by very close/intimate and/or prolonged contact with someone with symptomatic monkeypox, including through:

- Direct skin-to-skin contact with monkeypox rash, scabs, or sores. This can happen during sex and other intimate sexual contact, including kissing, hugging, massaging, and cuddling.
- Contact with respiratory secretions. This can happen during prolonged, face-to-face contact or intimate physical contact, such as kissing, cuddling, and sex with a person with monkeypox.
- Contact with contaminated objects and fabrics (such as unwashed clothing, bedding, sharing towels) that have been used by someone with monkeypox and haven’t been cleaned

A person with monkeypox is considered infectious and can spread it to others from when their first symptoms start until their skin lesions (rash) have healed (scabs have fallen, if present) and a fresh layer of skin has formed. This typically takes 2-4 weeks.

Duration of Isolation

If you have been diagnosed with or are suspected of having monkeypox infection, you are advised to isolate (stay at home and away from others).

If you are suspected of having monkeypox infection, you can stop isolating when you know you don’t have monkeypox.

If you are diagnosed with monkeypox, you should isolate until:

1. You have not had a fever (a temperature of 100.4°F or 38.0°C or greater) for at least 72 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicine; AND
2. Any respiratory symptoms, including sore throat, nasal congestion, or cough have improved; AND
3. You have had no new skin lesions in the previous 48 hours; AND
4. All your skin lesions have healed (scabs have fallen, if present) and a fresh layer of skin has formed, including any lesions in your mouth.

If you meet ALL of the criteria above, you can safely stop isolating.

Modified Duration of Isolation

If you are diagnosed with monkeypox, you can spread the infection to others until your skin lesions have completely gone away. But if it is not possible for you to isolate until that happens, it is important that you do the following to reduce the risk of spread to others:

- **Stay isolated as long as you have a fever or respiratory symptoms**
  This includes avoiding close/intimate or physical contact with other people and animals in your home and only leaving isolation because of an emergency or to see a healthcare provider.

- **If you still have skin lesions/rash that have not healed BUT you do not have a fever or respiratory symptoms, you can leave isolation for essential purposes**, such as going to a grocery store or pharmacy.
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Note: If you leave isolation you must:
- Leave for as short a time as possible and avoid crowded places.
- Cover all parts of the skin lesions/rash with clothing, gloves, and/or bandages.
- Wear a well-fitting mask or respirator when interacting with others.
- Drive yourself if you can. If public transit or ride share is your only option, try to avoid busy transit times. Keep as much distance as possible between yourself and open the windows.

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- Stay home and away from others
  - Ask friends or relatives to help get groceries, medication, and other essentials or order online. Ask people to leave items outside. They should not touch anything that you have touched without wearing disposable gloves until it has been cleaned.
  - Don’t have non-essential visitors in the home.
- Avoid close contact with people you live with
  - Sleep in a separate room if possible.
  - Use a separate bathroom if possible. If not, clean it yourself and follow the guidance on the CDC’s webpage Disinfecting Home and Other Non-Healthcare Settings.
  - Minimize the time spent in the same room with others.
    If you need to spend time in the same room as someone in your household, cover all skin lesions with clothes, gloves and/or bandages as appropriate and minimize any physical contact. In addition, you, and the person you are in the room with (if over 2 years of age) should wear a well-fitting mask or respirator. It is particularly important to try to avoid close prolonged contact with young children and people who are pregnant, breastfeeding, or immunosuppressed, or people who have a history of atopic dermatitis or eczema as they may be at higher risk of serious illness.
    - Avoid hugging; massaging; kissing; oral, anal, and vaginal sex; or touching the genitals or anus of others.
- Do not share items you have used with other people or animals, including bedding, towels, clothes, utensils, and cups among other items, unless they have been cleaned (see below).
- Launder or disinfect items that have been worn or handled and clean and disinfect surfaces that have been touched by a skin lesion. Clean them yourself if possible.
- Try to avoid contaminating upholstered furniture and other porous materials that cannot be laundered by placing coversheets, waterproof mattress covers, blankets, or tarps over these surfaces.
- Clean your hands frequently throughout the day by washing with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitizers that contain at least 60% alcohol.

Tips to reduce the risk of spreading the lesions to different parts of your body

- Avoid use of contact lenses to prevent spreading the infection to your eyes.
- Avoid shaving areas of the body that have the skin lesions/rash.

Cleaning, disinfection, and waste disposal

- Laundry (e.g., bedding, towels, clothing) may be washed in a standard washing machine with warm water and detergent. Soiled laundry should not be shaken or handled in a way that may spread infectious particles.
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- If other people must handle your unwashed laundry, to reduce their risk of exposure, they should wear gloves and a well-fitting mask and cover any exposed skin.
- **Dishes and eating utensils** should be washed in a dishwasher or by hand with warm water and dish soap.
- **Contaminated surfaces** should be cleaned and disinfected. Many standard household cleaning/disinfectants may be used – see the EPA website for a list of EPA-registered disinfectants.
  - Read the manufacturer’s directions; make sure it is the right product for your surface.
  - Pre-clean the surface with soap and water if the directions mention pre-cleaning or if the surface is visibly dirty. Dirt can keep the disinfectant from working.
  - Follow the contact time instructions; the surface should remain wet for the amount of time indicated to ensure the product is effective. Reapply if necessary.
- **Trash/Waste**: Have a lined trash can in the room where you are isolating for disposal of gloves, bandages, paper towels and other general trash. Seal the bag and dispose of in the regular trash. Wear gloves when handling and disposing of trash.

See CDC Guidance for Disinfection of the Home and Non-Healthcare Setting for more information and tips about cleaning during and after monkeypox.

Masks

It is possible for the monkeypox virus to spread through respiratory secretions. To be safe, it is recommended that you wear a well-fitting mask or respirator around others for as long as you are infectious. In addition, it is recommended for extra protection that household members wear a well-fitting mask or respirator if they will be in close contact with you.

Pets

No cases of monkeypox in pets have been reported in the US as part of the current outbreak. But it is possible that pets could become infected or contaminated with the virus through close contact with an infected person and spread the virus to others. See the CDC webpage Pets in the Home for information about what do if you have a pet.

If you need to walk your pet outside, make sure the skin lesions/rash on your body is completely covered by clothing, gloves, and/or bandages, and wear a well-fitting mask while you are outside of your home.

Resuming sexual activity after isolation ends

While you are isolating you are advised to avoid any sexual activity.

There may be a risk of passing monkeypox to a sex partner even when you no longer need to isolate because the virus may remain in semen and other genital excretions. If you have sex after ending isolation, it is recommended that you use condoms for a period of time. Unfortunately, we don’t know how long this is needed - some experts recommend the use of condoms for a minimum of 8 weeks. This guidance will be updated when we learn more.

What should I do if I have additional questions?

Visit the ph.lacounty.gov/monkeypox or the CDC monkeypox webpage When you are sick for more information.
If you do not have a provider or have questions about isolation, call the Public Health Call Center at 1-833-540-0473 - open daily 8:00 am to 8:30 pm.