

What is mpox?

Mpox is a disease that causes a contagious skin rash. The rash starts out small, and often changes in shape throughout the duration of disease.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms most commonly include a distinctive rash or sores that starts out as macules and papules (small bumps like pimples), then turns into vesicles (fluid filled lesions like blisters) and pustules (pus-filled lesions). Some but not all people also have fever or chills, fatigue, muscle or body aches, enlarged lymph nodes, and pain and difficulty swallowing. The vesicular and pustular stages of the rash often have a distinctive divot in the center.

How long does this disease last?

The average time it takes for an individual to become infected after an exposure is approximately 1-2 weeks, but may take as long as 21 days.

Based on information we know now, an individual can spread mpox from the time symptoms start until the rash forms scabs and new skin has formed (usually about 3 weeks).

How is mpox spread?

- **Direct contact:** This is the main source of spread. Mpox can be spread through direct person to person contact with the rash or sores. This usually occurs via sexual or intimate close contact.
- **Fomite transmission:** indirect contact is rare, but sharing of towels, blankets, or other fabric materials may increase risk if the fabric first touches the sores from the infected individual and then is handled by another person who is not infected.
- There is a low risk of contracting mpox from just present being in the same room as a case.

Who is at risk for mpox infection?

Anyone can develop mpox, but the risk is highest for those who have had direct intimate contact with someone who is positive, or who have had recent anonymous intimate partners. The majority of cases identified so far have been in gay and bisexual men who have sex with men.

The risk to school aged children is low.

What preventive measures and treatments are available?

- A vaccine is available for close contacts that have been exposed to a case. It can be given to children and adolescents at a health care provider's office, and in collaboration with the Chicago Department of Public Health.
- Treatment is available, and should be discussed in collaboration with the individual's healthcare provider.



What should schools do?

- Allow staff and students flexibility to stay home if they are sick.
- If a student or staff member reports a confirmed case of mpox, please report to the CDPH Youth Settings team to perform a risk assessment of contacts and to refer for vaccination those who are eligible.
- Individuals who are exposed to a positive case do not need to be excluded from school.

What are recommendations for exclusion?

- Individuals with a confirmed diagnosis of mpox should be excluded from school until their rash scabs over and a new layer of skin forms, which may take up to 3 weeks.

For more information, visit: https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/cdph/supp_info/health-protection/get-the-facts-monkeypox.html

