

Monkeypox - Isolation and infection prevention and control advice for people isolating at home

21 July 2022

About monkeypox

Monkeypox is an infectious illness that can be passed from person to person. As you have or may have the virus it is important you stay home, to not see others, and to minimise contact with others you live with.

Transmission

The virus that causes monkey pox can be passed on through contact with:

- bodily fluids and direct contact with skin lesions (bumps or blisters caused by the virus)
- bedding, towels or clothing that has come into contact with fluid from skin blisters or your bodily fluids
- respiratory droplets (This is more likely when someone with the virus has ongoing or longer contact with others)

Symptoms

- The virus usually starts with a fever or sometimes a rash.
- After a few days, a rash usually appears on the place of infection and then can spread to other parts of the body. It may also appear on the palms of hands and the soles of the feet, inside the mouth, or on the genitalia. These skin lesions may become itchy or painful.

Other symptoms can include:

- headache
- chills
- fever
- swollen glands
- muscle and body aches
- backache
- tiredness

How long you will be infectious and need to isolate for

- You are at risk of passing on the virus to others from when you first develop symptoms.
- You'll no longer be infectious once your rash or skin lesions have crusted over, dried up or fallen off. This may be for 2-3 weeks.
- A health professional will let you know when it is safe for you to leave your house and you no longer need to isolate.
- After your lesions have crusted over or fallen off there may be scabs that remain on your skin for some time, and these can also be infectious to others.

Preventing transmission to others

Isolating from other people

As monkeypox is an infectious illness it is important you remain at home while you isolate. That means you should not:

- go to work, college, recreation or education facilities
- have friends or relatives visit you
- have close contact with others until your skin lesions have crusted over, the scabs have fallen off and a fresh layer of skin has formed underneath.

It is also important that you:

- do not share your bed with anyone else
- do not let others enter the room you are in
- stay away from others in your household by isolating in a separate room, and if possible open windows to improve air flow through your house
- do not engage in sexual activity with others. You will be advised when it is safe to resume sexual activity by your healthcare provider
- if possible, use a separate toilet/bathroom. Where there is not a separate bathroom, clean the bathroom facilities after you use them before anyone else in your household enters the room. Use the cleaning wipes that have been provided to you
- avoid preparing your own meals and do not share food and drinks with others; and
- avoid any contact with household pets and animals. Do not let pets into your room or on to your bed. You may cause an infection in your pet.

Isolation packs

You will have been provided with some items for use during your isolation period to help prevent the spread of the virus onto others. Items include:

- medical masks - single use disposable
- gloves - single use disposable
- long sleeve disposable gowns – single use disposable
- box of tissues
- alcohol-based hand sanitiser
- cleaning and disinfecting wipes
- yellow 'biohazard' bags for rubbish

Hygiene practices

- Clean your hands frequently using alcohol-based hand sanitiser or soap and water. Take care if you have open blisters or lesions on your hands
- If you need to leave the room you are in, wear a medical mask and long sleeve tops and trousers. If you have lesions on your feet wear socks. If you have lesions on your hands wear a pair of disposable gloves.
- Do not share toothbrushes, razors or other personal items with others
- Cover your mouth and nose when sneezing and coughing with disposable tissues. Throw used tissues into a bag. Refer to **Managing rubbish**.
- Use a folded sheet or towel to sit on items of furniture with fabric covers to protect the surface. This linen should be washed as per advice under **Clothing and linen**. This is because soft furnishings on chair can be very hard to clean, so the sheet or towel will help protect the fabric and is much easier to clean.

Protecting other people you live with

To reduce the risk of passing on the virus, people you live with should:

- clean their hands regularly with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitiser.
- keep their distance from you and avoid entering your room.

If another person needs to enter your room, you should:

- both put on a medical mask and cover your lesions with clothing.
- if possible, keep a distance of at least 1 m between each other. Only have one household member should enter the room and keep it as the same person throughout your isolation period.

When distance cannot be maintained, the household member should:

- wear disposable gloves and a long sleeve gown
- clean their hands with either soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitiser, before and after contact with you or places you have been
- remove their gown and gloves carefully, put carefully into the provided yellow bag and then wash/clean their hands thoroughly.

If it will not be possible for you to follow these requirements, please tell the health professional.

If you need to leave your house for an essential reason

Discuss with your healthcare service provider on what preventions and precautions you need to take.

Caring for your skin

- If dressings or bandages are needed for covering up skin lesions it is best that you put on and replace these yourself.
- Used dressings and bandages should be put into a plastic bag and tied and placed into the provided yellow biohazard bag supplied.
- After putting on or removing any dressings, clean your hands either with alcohol-based hand sanitiser or wash hands with soap and water thoroughly and dry your hands completely before and after changing any dressings or bandages.

Clothing and linen

- Some items of your clothing may become soiled due to leakage of fluid from the blisters/skin lesions.
- The virus can also be passed on through linen and other laundry items you have contact with, so it is important you have your own linen, towels and bedding. Do not share these items with others you live with.
- Only you should handle your bedding, towels and clothing.
- When needing to change bedding, you should carefully lift and roll bedding in on itself to prevent infectious particles from lesions and body fluids from travelling in the air. Do not shake bed linen/ quilts or blankets.
- Place items for washing into a bag first before taking it to the washing machine. Clean your hands before you use the washing machine.

Laundry

- Do not store, wash or tumble dry your linen and laundry with other household members' laundry.
- Wash items with laundry detergent at the highest temperature stated on label. Avoid using an 'eco' or 'quick wash' cycle. Dry clothes as per normal.

- Clean all surfaces e.g. washing machine including the lid or handle, after you have finished and clean your hands.
- Where households do not have their own washing machine, do not use laundry service or local laundromat. Local health service provider or regional response coordinators will determine the process for having items laundered if possible.

Food and drink

- Keep your own separate supply of plates, cups, knives and forks. These should be washed after use by you, either in a dishwasher using a full hot wash cycle or by hand with hot soapy water and left to air dry.
- If you have lesions/blisters on your hands, wear single use disposable gloves when washing up. Throw these away into a dedicated yellow rubbish bag as described below.

Managing rubbish

Rubbish should be placed in bin bags and tied off when $\frac{3}{4}$ full. Provision of special yellow rubbish bags (biohazard bag) and process for collection of rubbish will be provided to you by local health services.

Cleaning and disinfecting

While you are isolating

If you live by yourself:

- Regularly clean and disinfect areas of your home you are in by using the cleaning wipes provided. Pay particular attention to frequently touched objects and surfaces such as door handles, TV remote, benchtops etc.
- Regularly clean your hands with alcohol-based hand sanitiser or soap and water and dry hands thoroughly.

If you live with others:

- Wear a medical mask and use disposable gloves and long sleeve gown (provided) when cleaning.
- Regularly clean and disinfect household surfaces, toilets or floors, or any location where you have been or had contact with surfaces. Pay particular attention to frequently touched surfaces such as door handles, TV remote, light switches etc.
- Use the provided wipes or common household disinfectants including diluted household bleach products. To clean floors it is best to use a damp mop.
- Avoid vacuuming or dry sweeping until you have finished your isolation period to prevent stirring up infected particles.
- Remove and dispose of all items of personal protective equipment (e.g. gloves) following completion of tasks, then clean your hands.
- Regularly clean your hands with alcohol-based hand sanitiser (provided) or soap and water and dry hands thoroughly.

After you've finished isolating and recovered

- Once you've finished isolating it is important to thoroughly clean all areas and spaces.
- If another person is carrying out this cleaning, they should wear a medical mask, gloves. Take care when using cleaning products, ensure you wash your hands thoroughly on completion of cleaning.

Clean from high to low

- Start cleaning surfaces higher up and work your way to the floor. This will make sure that any particulates or debris fall to the floor which will be cleaned last.

Clean to dirty

- Start by cleaning surfaces and objects that are cleaner and work your way to cleaning dirtier items (eg. toilets).
- Avoid going from an area that has not been cleaned to an area that has been cleaned. This ensures you aren't cross-contaminating items or surfaces.
- It's best to use a mask while you or anyone else is vacuuming. Used vacuum bag should be placed carefully into yellow rubbish bag along with any single use cloths used or wipes and bag tied off as described under [managing rubbish](#) section.