

**Virginia Department of Health:  
What Institutions of Higher Education Need to Know about Mpox  
December 19, 2022**

Strategy	What You Need to Know	How You Can Prepare or Help
<b>Stay informed about mpox and the current outbreak</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● This outbreak has affected many areas where mpox is not usually found. Reported cases in <a href="#">Virginia</a>, the U.S., and globally have declined since August.</li> <li>● Mpox spreads from person to person through direct contact with sores, scabs, or body fluids; contact with contaminated items, like linens; and respiratory droplets during prolonged face-to-face contact. Mpox can spread during intimate contact, including sex.</li> <li>● Anyone can get and spread mpox. Most cases are in men who self-identify as gay, bisexual, or other men who have sex with men. Those with multiple sex partners are currently at greatest risk.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Learn key concepts about mpox with <a href="#">VDH's Fact Sheet</a>.</li> <li>● Guidance is subject to change as we learn more; refer to the <a href="#">VDH website</a> and <a href="#">CDC website</a> for the most current information.</li> </ul>
<b>Rapidly identify and report suspected cases</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● VDH's <a href="#">Mpox Information Sheet for Healthcare Providers</a> provides key information, including when to suspect mpox. Localized rashes in the mouth or around the genitals or anus might be only symptom and can look like a sexually transmitted infection (STI).</li> <li>● Providers should <b>immediately</b> report all suspected cases to their local health department (LHD).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Share resources with clinical staff.</li> <li>● Know how to <a href="#">contact your LHD</a>, including after hours.</li> <li>● Report suspected cases with <a href="#">VDH's Morbidity Report</a>.</li> </ul>
<b>Test to identify cases</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Testing is recommended for people with mpox <a href="#">symptoms</a>; screening tests for people without symptoms are not needed.</li> <li>● VDH encourages using commercial lab testing whenever possible.</li> <li>● Free testing at <a href="#">Virginia's Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services</a> is available if <a href="#">criteria</a> are met.</li> <li>● STI and HIV testing and treatment are also recommended for sexually active people being evaluated for mpox.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Develop a plan for medical evaluation, including testing, if mpox is suspected.</li> <li>● Assess current supplies for testing.</li> <li>● If people do not have a healthcare provider, then facilitate evaluation at a public health clinic (e.g., LHD, Federally Qualified Health Center, STI clinic).</li> </ul>
<b>Implement infection control</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Personal protective equipment (PPE) is needed for healthcare providers caring for patients, staff handling laundry of patients, and staff cleaning patient areas. PPE means gown, gloves, eye protection, and NIOSH-approved respirator (healthcare providers) or well-fitting mask or respirator.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide training to staff about wearing PPE and other infection control precautions.</li> <li>● Ensure access to PPE for healthcare providers and nonclinical staff (including environmental cleaning staff).</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Healthcare facilities should follow <a href="#">infection control recommendations</a>.</li> <li>● Nonhealthcare facilities should follow <a href="#">cleaning and disinfection instructions</a> and <a href="#">guidance for congregate settings</a>. Pay particular attention to handling laundry.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ensure access to handwashing supplies, cleaning supplies, and disinfectants.</li> </ul>
<b>Isolate people with mpox</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● People with mpox are contagious from when symptoms start until all sores have healed and a fresh layer of skin has formed. This can take 2–4 weeks.</li> <li>● People with mpox should isolate in a private room. If a private room is not available, cohorting with other people with mpox is acceptable.</li> <li>● If leaving the isolation room or when separating from others is not possible, people with mpox should wear a well-fitting face mask, cover areas where rash or sores are present, and wash their hands.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Develop a plan for where people with mpox will stay, how they will be cared for and monitored, and how they can attend class or work remotely if they are able.</li> <li>● Provide <a href="#">VDH’s Handout for Patients with Mpox</a>.</li> <li>● For those isolating at home, refer to <a href="#">CDC guidance</a>.</li> </ul>
<b>Support contact tracing to identify and assess close contacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● When a case is identified, the LHD conducts contact tracing to identify, assess, and monitor close contacts.</li> <li>● Close contacts should monitor their health, but do <u>not</u> need to stay home (quarantine).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Support the LHD’s contact tracing efforts to help identify and monitor close contacts; encourage people to cooperate with the LHD.</li> <li>● Provide <a href="#">VDH’s Handouts for Close Contacts</a>.</li> </ul>
<b>Treat patients to minimize severe disease</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● There are no specific treatments approved by FDA for mpox, but antivirals available through CDC (e.g., TPOXX) might help those at risk of severe illness.</li> <li>● Healthcare providers can access <a href="#">treatment</a> by coordinating with the LHD.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Encourage patients to talk with their provider about treatment.</li> <li>● Encourage providers to contact the LHD to access treatment.</li> </ul>
<b>Vaccinate close contacts and high-risk groups to prevent infection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A 2-dose vaccine for postexposure prophylaxis (PEP) is available for known close contacts and for people with a high risk of exposure. The vaccine works best the sooner it is given; ideally, the first dose is given within 4 days of exposure.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Encourage prompt uptake of vaccine if recommended by the LHD.</li> </ul>
<b>Communicate the facts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Communicate with staff and students about mpox and how it spreads through close physical contact.</li> <li>● Stigma is harmful. It can create lost opportunities to detect and address infections in other populations and provide a false sense of security.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Combat stigma by providing fact-based information. Refer to <a href="#">CDC’s Reducing Stigma website</a>.</li> <li>● Refer to <a href="#">VDH’s Communication Resources website</a>.</li> </ul>
<b>Find more information</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">VDH mpox website</a> and <a href="#">CDC mpox website</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">CDC Considerations for Reducing Mpox Transmission in Congregate Living Settings</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">CDC Mpox Toolkit for Institutions of Higher Education</a></li> </ul>	