

Shared Housing - Staff

Monkeypox Overview

Monkeypox is a contagious rash illness that can spread from animals to people and from person to person. Anyone can get monkeypox, and it is a public health concern for all.

Monkeypox spreads from person to person through direct contact with sores, scabs, or body fluids; contact with contaminated items; and respiratory droplets during prolonged face-to-face contact. Monkeypox can spread during intimate contact, including sex. A person with monkeypox can spread it to others from the time symptoms start until the rash has fully healed and a fresh layer of skin has formed. The illness typically lasts 2-4 weeks.

Symptoms

People with monkeypox get a rash that may be located on or near the genitals and could be on other areas like the hands, feet, chest, face, or mouth. The rash will go through several stages, including scabs, before healing. The rash can initially look like pimples or blisters and may be painful or itchy.

Other symptoms of monkeypox can include:

- Fever
- Chills
- Swollen lymph nodes
- Exhaustion
- Muscle aches and backache
- Headache
- Respiratory symptoms (e.g. sore throat, nasal congestion, or cough)

Reducing Exposure

Being prepared for the event of positive cases can help ensure the safety of staff, residents, and volunteers at your organization. There are several ways to prepare, and the most important are to provide training and have a plan of action in the case of a positive test.

- Develop a plan for where people with monkeypox will stay, how they will be cared for and monitored, and how they can work remotely if they are able. Isolate staff who have monkeypox away from congregate settings until they are fully recovered. Additionally, offering flexible, non-punitive sick leave policies for staff members is critical to prevent spread of monkeypox.
- Soap and water or hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol should be available at all times and at no cost to all staff, volunteers, and residents. Anyone who touches lesions or clothing, linens, or surfaces that may have had contact with lesions should wash their hands immediately.
- Ensure access to PPE for healthcare providers and nonclinical staff (including environmental cleaning staff). PPE includes gloves, well-fitting masks, and gowns.
- Teach and require proper laundering, cleaning, and sanitizing using an EPA-registered disinfectant.
- Assist those who are eligible for vaccination to find vaccination locations, scheduling appointments, and arranging transportation.

Follow These Guidelines for Cleaning and Laundry

- Wear disposable gloves if you need to clean or touch your rash or sores. Throw out the gloves after using them and wash your hands.
- Wash your hands with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer after touching clothing, linens, or any surface that may have had contact with the rash or sores or fluid from the sores.
- If sharing a bathroom, clean and disinfect surfaces after use, especially if the rash or sores are exposed.
- Use standard household cleaners and disinfectants to clean and disinfect surfaces.
- Wash dirty dishes and utensils with warm water and soap or in a dishwasher.
- Place used linens, towels and clothes in a separate laundry bag or garbage bag.

Testing

Testing is recommended for people with symptoms to find out if they are infected with monkeypox. Only a healthcare provider can order a monkeypox test. If residents do not have a healthcare provider, then facilitate evaluation at a public health clinic.

What to Expect When You Get Tested

- You will likely need to fill out paperwork before you get tested.
- To get a specimen to test, the healthcare provider will use a swab to rub vigorously across lesions of your rash. The specimens will be tested in a lab to see if the monkeypox virus is detected.
- Results are usually available within a few days.

Cost of Monkeypox Testing

The cost of monkeypox testing depends on where you get it.

- Tests conducted by public health departments are usually free.
- Testing referrals from a private healthcare provider to a commercial lab or tests done in the hospital may involve a fee.

If You Have Positive Cases

People with monkeypox should be medically isolated (separated) in a private room to prevent spreading the disease. If a private room is not available, cohorting (putting people in groups) with others with monkeypox is acceptable. If leaving the isolation room, or when separating from others is not possible, people with monkeypox should wear a well-fitting facemask, cover areas where rash or sores are present, and wash their hands.

There are no specific treatments for monkeypox virus infections. However, there are ways to treat the symptoms (pain and itching) of a monkeypox infection by using over the counter medicines like ibuprofen, naproxen, acetaminophen, or antihistamines.

People who are likely to become severely ill (like patients with weakened immune systems) may qualify for antiviral drugs if recommended by a healthcare provider.

**For more information, visit www.vdh.virginia.gov/monkeypox/
or call 877-VAX-IN-VA (877-829-4682)**