

Virginia Department of Health: What K-12 Schools and Child Care Facilities Need to Know about Mpox December 22, 2022

Strategy	What You Need to Know	How You Can Prepare or Help
Stay informed about mpox and the current outbreak	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This outbreak has affected many areas where mpox is not usually found. Virginia cases have been trending downward since late August. At this time, the risk of mpox to children and teens in the United States is low. 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. Anyone can get and spread mpox. Cases in children have been reported. Most cases are in men who self-identify as gay, bisexual, or other men who have sex with men. Individuals with multiple sex partners are currently at greatest risk. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn key concepts about mpox with VDH’s Fact Sheet. Guidance is subject to change as we learn more; refer to the VDH website and CDC website for the most current information. Information specific to children may be found in CDC’s Clinical Considerations for Mpox in Children and Adolescents.
Rapidly identify and report suspected cases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VDH’s Mpox Information Sheet for Healthcare Providers provides key information, including when to suspect mpox. Localized rashes in the mouth or around the genitals might be the only symptom and can look like a sexually transmitted infection. School nurses should immediately report suspected cases to their local health department (LHD). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share resources with school nurses. Know how to contact your LHD, including after hours. Report suspected cases with VDH’s Morbidity Report.
Test to identify cases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Testing is recommended for people with mpox symptoms; screening tests for people without symptoms are not needed. VDH encourages using commercial lab testing whenever possible. Free testing at Virginia’s Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services is available if criteria are met. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage staff and students with suspected mpox to be evaluated by their healthcare provider. If people do not have a provider, then encourage evaluation at a public health clinic (e.g., LHD, Federally Qualified Health Center, STI clinic).
Implement infection control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal protective equipment (PPE) is needed for school nurses 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. Nonhealthcare facilities should follow cleaning and disinfection instructions. Pay particular attention to handling laundry. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide training to staff about wearing PPE and other infection control precautions. Ensure access to PPE for school nurses and environmental cleaning staff. Ensure access to handwashing supplies, cleaning supplies, and disinfectants.

<p>Isolate people with mpox</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Staff and students with mpox should isolate at home, and should not attend school or childcare. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a plan for how students can attend class remotely if they are able. • Provide VDH’s Handout for Patients with Mpox.
<p>Support contact tracing to identify and assess close contacts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When a case is identified, the LHD conducts contact tracing to identify, assess, and monitor close contacts. • Close contacts should monitor their health, but do <u>not</u> need to stay home (quarantine). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the LHD’s contact tracing efforts to help identify and monitor close contacts; encourage people to cooperate with the LHD. • Provide VDH’s Handouts for Close Contacts.
<p>Treat patients to minimize severe disease</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no specific treatments approved by FDA for mpox, but antivirals available through CDC (e.g., tecovirimat) might help those at risk of severe illness or those with complications from mpox. • Young children, children with eczema and other skin conditions, and children with immunocompromising conditions may be at increased risk of severe disease. • Some patients may also need medication to manage symptoms, including pain. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage patients to talk with their provider about treatment.
<p>Vaccinate close contacts and high-risk groups to prevent infection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A 2-dose vaccine for postexposure prophylaxis (PEP) is available for known close contacts and, as supply allows, adults 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. • Children and adolescents with exposure to people with suspected or confirmed mpox may be eligible for PEP with vaccination, immune globulin, or antiviral medication. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage prompt uptake of PEP if recommended by the LHD.
<p>Communicate the facts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate with staff and students about mpox and how it spreads through close physical contact. • Stigma is harmful. It can create lost opportunities to detect and address infections in other populations and provide a false sense of security. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combat stigma by providing fact-based information. Refer to CDC’s Reducing Stigma website and CDC’s Mpox Information for Teens and Young Adults. • Refer to VDH’s Communication Resources website.
<p>Find more information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VDH mpox website • CDC mpox website • Mpox Toolkit for Schools and Early Care and Education Programs • CDC Clinical Considerations for Mpox in Children and Adolescents 	