



Interim MPX Guidance for School Staff and Families

Last Updated: August 24, 2022

WHAT IS MPX?

MPX—formerly referred to as monkeypox—is a rare disease that is caused by infection with the MPX virus, which is related to the smallpox virus. MPX illness is less severe than smallpox but can still be serious.

HOW IS MPX TRANSMITTED?

MPX is primarily transmitted in the following ways:

- Direct contact with the rash, scabs, or body fluids of an infected person
- Intimate contact, including kissing or cuddling.
- Sharing unwashed bedding, towels, and clothing with an infected person
- Respiratory secretions through prolonged face-to-face interactions with an infected person

Note: Unlike COVID-19, respiratory transmission of MPX is rare; respiratory transmission is most likely to occur when a person is living with someone with MPX infection.

HAS MPX BEEN FOUND IN SCHOOLS?

Currently, MPX cases have not occurred in school settings.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF MPX?

The most characteristic symptom of MPX is a rash that can look like pimples or blisters on the face, inside the mouth, and on other parts of the body, like the hands, feet, chest, genitals, and around the anus. There are several illnesses that can cause a rash and fever in children, such as hand-foot-mouth disease and chickenpox (varicella).

Early or additional symptoms of MPX may include:

- Fever
- Headache
- Muscle aches and backache
- Swollen lymph nodes
- Chills

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF MPX AND COVID-19?

While MPX has some symptoms that are like COVID-19 (e.g., fever, low energy, chills), a person with MPX typically develops a rash with firm bumps on the face, hands, feet, body, or genital area.



WHAT SHOULD SCHOOL STAFF AND/OR FAMILIES DO IF THEY ARE EXPOSED TO MPX?*

If school staff and/or families are exposed to MPX, they should first notify a primary care provider. They can come to school if they don't have any symptoms. A close contact to someone with MPX should get vaccinated as soon as possible, preferably within 4 days of exposure. If they develop any symptoms of MPX after exposure, they should stay home and contact their health care provider.

HOW SHOULD STAFF AND FAMILIES RESPOND TO SUSPECTED OR CONFIRMED MPX CASES?*

If a staff member or student develops any symptoms of MPX after an exposure, they should stay home and contact their health care provider right away to discuss testing options. Persons should stay home while waiting to be tested and while waiting for the test result. They can return upon receipt of a negative test result and clearance by their health care provider.

If a student or staff member tests positive for MPX, they should follow CDPH's [MPX Home Isolation Guidance for the General Public](#).

WILL STAFF AND FAMILIES BE NOTIFIED IF THERE IS A MPX CASE IN A CLASSROOM?*

The risk for transmission of MPX in most school settings is likely very low. Schools may choose to notify staff and families regarding a MPX case but should reassure staff and families that the likelihood of spread is very low unless there is direct skin-to-skin contact with an infected person. Schools should use [non-stigmatizing language](#) when discussing MPX with their communities.

HOW CAN SCHOOL STAFF AND FAMILIES PREVENT MPX EXPOSURE?

Exposure to MPX can be prevented by:

- Avoiding close, skin-to-skin contact with people who have a rash that looks like MPX
- Avoiding contact with contaminated materials such as clothing, bedding, or towels
- Wearing PPE (e.g., mask and gloves) if unable to avoid contact with someone who has symptoms
- Washing hands often

WHERE CAN SCHOOL STAFF AND FAMILIES GET TESTED FOR MPX?

Staff and families should contact their health care provider if they are seeking a MPX test.

IS THE MPX VACCINE AVAILABLE?

Vaccine for MPX is available but supply is limited. Vaccine is currently being prioritized for certain people, such as those with exposure to confirmed or suspected MPX cases or with other risk factors.

* Alameda County Public Health Department will work with schools to respond to these situations if they arise.