



## **Mpox Fact Sheet for Settings that Serve Adolescents**

### **What are the signs and symptoms of mpox?**

Mpox disease is a serious illness that can look like many other diseases. Mpox may not always appear the same way (especially in those who have weak immune systems) and could be confused with illnesses like chickenpox or cold sores.

- ✓ People sick with mpox can have fever, headache, muscle aches, backache, swollen lymph nodes, chills, and/or exhaustion.
- ✓ After they start to feel sick, a rash almost always develops, usually within 1-2 days. Some people may develop a rash first, while others only have a rash.
- ✓ The spots from the rash typically form at the same time and grow together. The rash may appear on the face, inside the mouth, and/or on other parts of the body.
- ✓ The rash goes through different stages ending with scabbing and crusting. It is fully healed when a fresh layer of skin is formed. The entire illness course typically lasts 2-4 weeks.

### **How is mpox spread?**

- ✓ Through close, sustained, personal contact with a person with mpox, particularly skin-to-skin contact. This can happen during activities like hugging and contact sports.
- ✓ Though anyone can get mpox, very few cases of mpox in Texas are reported among adolescents (<18 years of age). Most mpox cases are related to sexual contact among men who have sex with men, but any kind of sexual contact with a person infected with mpox can be an exposure.
- ✓ Direct contact with mpox rash, scabs, or body fluids (including respiratory fluids) from a person with mpox.
- ✓ Touching objects, surfaces or fabrics recently used by someone with mpox.
- ✓ Mpox can spread from the time symptoms start until the rash has fully healed and a fresh layer of skin has formed.

### **What should you do if you think a student at your facility was exposed to mpox or is sick with mpox?**

#### If the student has exposure without being sick:

- ✓ The student may still attend school if no symptoms are present.
- ✓ Contact the student's parents/guardians to recommend they speak to their healthcare provider and monitor the student for mpox symptoms for 21 days from last exposure.
- ✓ Offer to take the student's temperature daily if a reliable thermometer is not available at home. If using an oral thermometer, it should only be used by the student being monitored for mpox.

#### If the student has symptoms of mpox:

- ✓ Wear disposable gloves, a gown, eye protection, and a face mask while evaluating a student with symptoms.
- ✓ Send the student home from school immediately. If the student cannot go home immediately, they must cover any rash with long sleeves or bandages and wear a well-fitting face mask. Keep the student away from others in a private space, like an office.
- ✓ Contact parents/guardians to recommend the student refrains from unnecessary contact with others until they are seen by their healthcare provider.



- ✓ Share mpox educational material with parents and facility staff, and initiate cleaning procedures (see "Further Resources").
- ✓ Contact your local or regional health department if you have any questions on how to proceed (see "Further Resources").

### **Can a student or adult staff member spread mpox to others?**

Yes, if there is close, sustained contact between a person with mpox and another person. Safety measures and quickly responding to a person sick with mpox can prevent spread.

### **How should a possible case of mpox be reported to public health authorities?**

Contact your local health department (see "Further Resources") to share all known information on suspected or known mpox cases at your facility. Texas state law (TAC Chapter §97.2 and §97.3) requires that school staff report outbreaks or unusual diseases, such as mpox, to public health quickly.

### **Should a student with known or suspected mpox disease be excluded from your facility?**

Texas state law (TAC Chapter §97.7) allows school administrators to exclude students with skin infections, like an mpox rash, from school. In consultation with the local health department, the student can return when a health professional has ensured the student is no longer infectious (when scabs are fully healed and have a new layer of skin over them) and/or does not pose a health risk to others.

### **Should your facility close if a student or adult staff member has known or suspected mpox?**

No, a facility closure is not mandatory. However, you should consult with your local health department (see "Further Resources") on cleaning and disinfection and communicate with students, parents, and school staff. The health department might have additional information or recommendations for your facility.

### **What are the correct cleaning and disinfection procedures in response to a known or suspected mpox case in your facility?**

Wear disposable gloves and a well-fitting face mask while cleaning possibly infected areas. Use an EPA-registered disinfectant to clean high-touch surfaces and items, and any areas where the person has spent time in your facility. Handle any fabric items (e.g., clothes, linens, and towels) the sick person might have used carefully, making sure you do not shake them or keep them around other items. Wash the fabric items on their own with detergent and according to label instructions.

Avoid activities that could spread dried material from lesions (e.g., use of fans, dry dusting, sweeping, or vacuuming) in these areas. Perform hand hygiene frequently using an alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR) that contains at least 60% alcohol. Soap and water can also be used to wash hands if ABHR is unavailable.

### **How can you prevent the spread of mpox in your facility?**

Facilities should follow their usual operational guidance meant to reduce the transmission of infectious diseases. This includes students, staff, and volunteers staying home when sick, ensuring access to adequate handwashing supplies (including soap and water), routine cleaning



and disinfection practices, identifying private spaces for assessment of an ill student away from others, and providing personal protective equipment for staff who care for students with infectious diseases. Wear gloves, eye protection, a gown, and a mask when handling potentially contaminated laundry and while cleaning contaminated areas.

**Further Resources:**

Find your local health department contact:

<https://dshs.texas.gov/idcu/investigation/conditions/contacts/>

DSHS information on mpox: <https://www.dshs.state.tx.us/IDCU/disease/mpox/>

CDC information for settings serving children or adolescents:

<https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/mpox/schools/faq.html>

EPA disinfectants for emerging viral pathogens: <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/disinfectants-emerging-viral-pathogens-evps-list-q>