

Mpox (monkeypox) - Isolation and infection prevention and control advice for people isolating at home

What is mpox?

Mpox is a viral infection, that is mainly spread through skin-to-skin contact with someone who has mpox. It is usually a mild illness and most people recover within a few weeks.

There is currently a global outbreak of mpox and recently there have been several cases confirmed in Aotearoa, New Zealand. More information on mpox can be found on the Ministry of Health website at <http://www.health.govt.nz/mpox>.

Preventing transmission to others

Isolating from other people

As mpox is an infectious illness it is important you remain at home while you isolate. That means you should not:

- Go to work, recreation, or education facilities
- have friends or relatives visit you
- have close contact with others until your skin lesions have crusted over, the scabs have fallen off and a fresh layer of skin has formed underneath.

It is also important that you:

- Do not share your bed with anyone else (including animals)
- do not let others enter the area you are isolating in
- stay away from others in your household by isolating in a separate room, and if possible open windows to improve air flow through the area you are isolating in
- do not engage in sexual activity. You will be advised when it is safe to resume sexual activity and what precautions you need to take by your healthcare provider
- if possible, use a separate toilet/bathroom. Where there is not a separate bathroom, clean the bathroom facilities after you use them before anyone else in your household enters the room.
- avoid preparing your own meals in shared areas and do not share food and drinks with others; and

- avoid any contact with household pets and animals. Do not let pets into your room or on to your bed. You may cause an infection in your pet.

While you are isolating, health staff will be in contact regularly to check on your health. They will also provide advice on what to expect with your symptoms, answer any other questions you may have and they may be able to provide you with masks. General household detergent and disinfection products are adequate for cleaning.

Health staff will advise when you can finish self-isolating and they will perform a final check-up before you are released from management by the Public Health Service.

Hygiene practices

- Clean your hands frequently soap and water, and dry thoroughly using own dedicated towel, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser. Take care if you have open blisters or lesions on your hands.
- If you need to leave the room you are in, wear a medical mask and cover skin lesions with a bandage/ band aid or clothing such as long sleeve tops and trousers. If you have lesions on your feet wear socks. If you have lesions on your hands wear a pair of disposable gloves.
- Do not share toothbrushes, roll on deodorants, razors, skin creams or other personal items with others.
- Cover your mouth and nose when sneezing and coughing either by coughing into your elbow using disposable tissues. Throw used tissues into a bag and clean your hands. Refer to [Managing rubbish](#).
- Use a folded sheet or towel to sit on items of furniture with fabric covers to protect the surface. This linen should be washed as per advice under [Clothing and linen](#). This is because soft furnishings can be very hard to clean, so the sheet or towel will help protect the fabric and is much easier to clean.

Caring for your skin

If dressings or bandages are needed for skin lesions;

- Clean your hands either with alcohol-based hand sanitiser or wash with soap and water and dry thoroughly before and after changing any dressings or bandages.
- Place used dressings and bandages into a rubbish bag and tie off before being disposed of as usual with your domestic waste.

Protecting other people you live with

To reduce the risk of passing on the virus, people you live with should:

- Clean their hands regularly with soap and water and dry thoroughly using separate towel to yours or use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser.
- Keep their distance from you and avoid entering your room.

If another person needs to enter your room, you should:

- Both put on a medical mask.
- Cover your lesions with clothing or dressing/bandages.

- If possible, keep a distance of at least 1 m between each other. Only have one household member should enter the room and keep it as the same person throughout your isolation period.
- Clean their hands with either soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitiser, before and after contact with you or areas you have used.

If it will not be possible for you to follow these requirements, please tell the health professional.

If you need to leave your house for an essential reason

Discuss with your healthcare service provider what preventions and precautions you need to take.

Clothing and linen

- Some items of your clothing may become soiled due to leakage of fluid from the blisters/skin lesions.
- The virus can also be passed on through linen and other laundry items you have contact with, so it is important you have your own linen, towels and bedding. Do not share these items with others you live with.
- Only you should handle your bedding, towels and clothing.
- When needing to change bedding, you should carefully lift and roll bedding in on itself to prevent infectious particles from lesions and body fluids from travelling in the air. Do not shake bed linen/ quilts or blankets.
- Place items for washing into a bag first before taking it to the washing machine. Clean your hands before you use the washing machine.

Laundry

- Do not store, wash or tumble dry your linen and laundry with other household members' laundry.
- Wash items with laundry detergent at the highest temperature stated on label. Avoid using an 'eco' or 'quick wash' cycle. Dry clothes as per normal.
- Clean all surfaces e.g. washing machine including the lid or handle, after you have finished and clean your hands.
- Where households do not have their own washing machine, do not use laundry service or local laundromat. Local health service provider or regional response coordinators will determine the process for having items laundered if possible.

Food and drink

- Keep your own separate supply of plates, cups, knives and forks. These should be washed after use by you, either in a dishwasher using a full hot wash cycle or by hand with hot soapy water and left to air dry.
- If you have lesions/blisters on your hands, wear single use disposable gloves when washing up. Throw these away into a dedicated yellow rubbish bag as described below.

Managing rubbish

As an additional precaution, all disposable rubbish bags should be no more than $\frac{3}{4}$ full and placed into a second disposable bag, tied securely, before being disposed of as usual with your domestic waste.

Cleaning and disinfecting

While you are isolating

If you live by yourself:

- Regularly clean and disinfect areas of your home you are in. Pay particular attention to frequently touched objects and surfaces such as door handles, TV remote, benchtops etc.
- Regularly clean your hands with alcohol-based hand sanitiser or soap and water and dry hands thoroughly.

If you live with others:

- Wear a medical mask and use disposable gloves
- Regularly clean and disinfect household surfaces, toilets or floors, or any location where you have been or had contact with surfaces. Pay particular attention to frequently touched surfaces such as door handles, TV remote, light switches etc.
- Use common household disinfectants including diluted household bleach products. To clean floors it is best to use a damp mop.
- Avoid vacuuming or dry sweeping until you have finished your isolation period to prevent stirring up infected particles.
- Remove and dispose of all items including cleaning cloths and personal protective equipment (e.g., gloves) following completion of tasks, into disposable bag as described in [managing rubbish](#) then clean your hands.
- Regularly clean your hands with alcohol-based hand sanitiser (provided) or soap and water and dry hands thoroughly.

After you've finished isolating and recovered

- Once you've finished isolating it is important to thoroughly clean all areas and spaces.
- If another person is carrying out this cleaning, they should wear a medical mask, gloves. Take care when using cleaning products, ensure you wash your hands thoroughly on completion of cleaning.

Clean from high to low

- Start cleaning surfaces higher up and work your way to the floor. This will make sure that any particulates or debris fall to the floor which will be cleaned last.

Clean to dirty

- Start by cleaning surfaces and objects that are cleaner and work your way to cleaning dirtier items (eg. toilets).
- Avoid going from an area that has not been cleaned to an area that has been cleaned. This ensures you aren't cross-contaminating items or surfaces.
- It's best to use a mask while you or anyone else is vacuuming. Used vacuum bag should be placed carefully into yellow rubbish bag along with any single use cloths used or wipes and bag tied off as described under [managing rubbish](#) section.