



A Union of Professionals

WORK SHOULDN'T HURT

Monkeypox Behind Bars What Officers and Staff Need to Know

Monkeypox virus (MPV) is a disease that can cause flu-like symptoms and a rash. Human-to-human transmission of MPV occurs by direct contact with infected body fluids, or from exposure to respiratory droplets during prolonged face-to-face contact.

It's important to note that transmission of MPV is related to behaviors rather than to communities or identities. This virus is not limited by gender or sexuality and can spread to anyone, anywhere through close personal, often skin-to-skin, contact.

MPV is Spread in Several Ways

The primary mode of transmission of MPV is through direct contact with a lesion that contains the virus or direct contact with bodily fluids that contain the virus. It's also possible for the virus to be spread through contact with objects like ankle and handcuffs, countertops, doorknobs and light switches. MPV is also spread through respiratory droplets. If there is a known or suspected case of MPV in your facility, keep in mind that:

- Close direct contact with MPV rash, scabs, or body fluids from a person with MPV can cause a person to become infected.
- Touching objects, fabrics (clothing, bedding or towels), and surfaces that have been used by someone with MPV can cause an infection, and
- Contact with respiratory droplets during face-to-face interactions can cause an MPV infection.

Workers in correctional facilities, jails, detention centers and prisons should be on high alert. Confirmed and suspected cases of MPV have been reported in facilities in Arizona, California, Illinois, New York and Texas.

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What Are the Signs and Symptoms of MPV?

MPV can take four to 21 days to produce illness after someone has been exposed to the virus.

- MPV symptoms usually start with a general, all-over feeling of being ill.
- Flu-like symptoms such as fever and muscle aches develop.
- Lymph nodes become swollen.
- A few days later, a blister-like rash appears that looks like chickenpox. This may begin on the face and spread elsewhere on the body, or, if acquired during intimate or sexual contact, may begin in the genitals or anus.
- The rash dries up a week or two later, and recovery continues.

MONKEYPOX (MPV)

Don't panic.
KNOW THE FACTS, AND FOLLOW THE SCIENCE.

Transmission
Monkeypox (MPV) is spread by close skin-to-skin contact with an infected person or their clothes, linen or towels.

Common Signs and Symptoms*
**Seek medical help urgently if you think you've been exposed or have any or all symptoms.*

- A distinctive rash
- Swollen lymph nodes
- Fever/flu-like symptoms

The **American Federation of Teachers** is a union of 1.7 million professionals that champions fairness; democracy; economic opportunity; and high-quality public education, healthcare and public services for our students, their families and our communities. We are committed to advancing these principles through community engagement, organizing, collective bargaining and political activism, and especially through the work our members do.

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Altogether, MPV infection lasts two to four weeks. Infected people are no longer contagious to others after all their skin lesions crust over or heal.

Areas of Concern in Correctional Facilities, Jails, Detention Centers, and Prisons

Direct skin-to-skin contact is more than enough to propel the spread of MPV. Workers should pay close attention during these day-to-day activities:

- Crowded conditions in facility intake and holding cells—where people spend hours shoulder to shoulder, and wait to be processed into facilities or for court appearances—are a top concern.
- During transportation operations when inmates and detainees often ride together in buses, vans and other vehicles.
- At mealtimes, when individuals stand close together waiting for meals or are sitting at crowded tables.
- In the laundry room. MPV can spread to others who might encounter personal linens, clothing and bedding during laundry operations.
- During close face-to-face interactions facilitywide. However, of particular concern are interactions that may take place at cell doors and gates where individuals tend to get very close and tend to speak loudly.

How Can I Protect Myself from Exposure?

MPV doesn't spread as easily as COVID-19, and it's rarely fatal. Nevertheless, some prison health experts are worried about a looming health crisis behind bars. Anyone in close contact with a person with MPV can get it and should take steps to protect themselves. Take the following steps to prevent getting MPV:

Avoid close, skin-to-skin contact with people who have a rash that looks like MPV.

- MPV infection lasts two to four weeks. Infected people are no longer contagious to others after all their skin lesions crust over and separate from healthy skin formed underneath.
- Do not touch the rash or scabs of a person with MPV.
- Do not kiss, hug, cuddle or have sex with someone with MPV.
- Do not share eating utensils or cups with a person with MPV.
- Do not handle or touch the bedding, towels or clothing of a person with MPV.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Isolate any known or suspected MPV cases in your facility.
- Vaccines may be recommended for people who have had or may have contact with someone who has MPV, or for workers who may be exposed to the virus.

Note: Cleaning frequently touched surfaces regularly will deactivate the virus. Ordinary cleaning products/disinfectants will work. Products should be applied according to the manufacturer's instructions, including allowing time for the product to work before wiping dry. Objects like shared sports equipment, lunch trays, electronic equipment, and other shared items should be cleaned according to manufacturer's instructions between uses.

Wear Appropriate Personal Protective Equipment

Employers are responsible for ensuring that workers are protected from exposure to MPV. Personal protective equipment (PPE) should be worn by staff who are working with known or suspected MPV cases:

- **Isolation areas:** Workers who enter isolation areas should wear a gown, gloves, eye protection, and a NIOSH-approved particulate respirator equipped with N95 filters or higher.
- **Laundry:** When handling dirty laundry from people with known or suspected MPV infection,

workers should wear a gown, gloves, eye protection, and a well-fitting mask or respirator. PPE is not necessary after the wash cycle is completed.

- **Transportation:** Workers should wear protective suits, gloves, eye protection, and a NIOSH-approved particulate respirator equipped with

N95 filters or higher during transportation operations.

If transmission levels are deemed medium to high in your facility, workers should wear gloves and at minimum a facemask (N95 respirator preferred) and eye protection.

For more information, contact the AFT Health and Safety Team at 4healthandsafety@aft.org. [Aug. 18, 2022]

MPV Images: [CDC Signs and Symptoms](#)

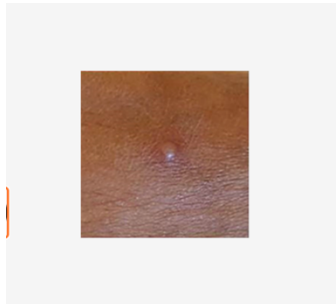


Photo credit: UK Health Security Agency

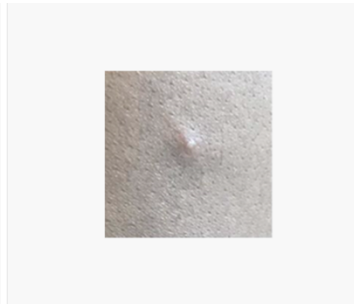


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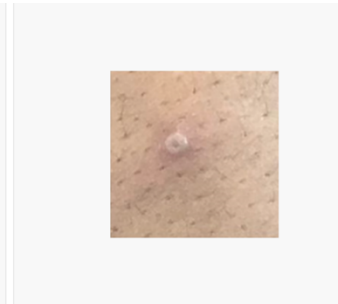


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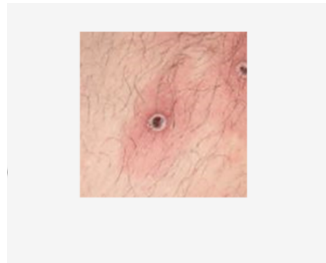


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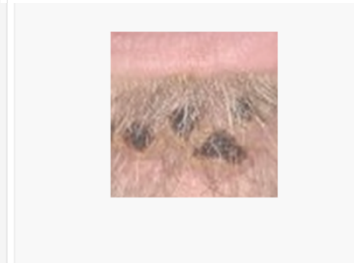


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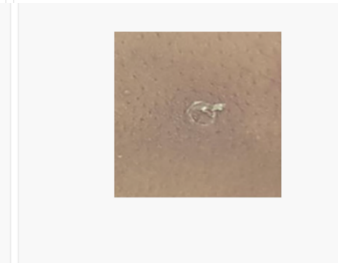


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Photo Credit: NHS England High Consequence Infectious Diseases Network

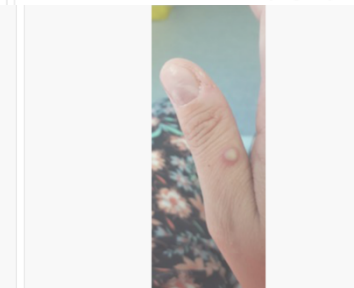


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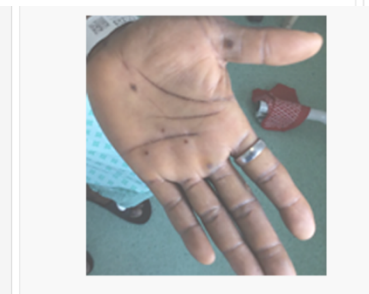


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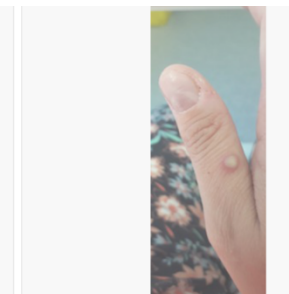


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