

What Homeless Service Providers Need to Know about Monkeypox

September 2022

What you need to know.	How you can prepare or help.
Stay informed about monkeypox and the current outbreak. - Monkeypox is a rare viral disease. It is rarely fatal but can be very painful. It spreads from person to person through direct contact with sores, scabs, infected body fluids, or contaminated bedding or clothing. It can also spread during prolonged face-to-face contact. It does not spread through the air like COVID-19. - Anyone can get and spread monkeypox. Right now, most cases are in men who identify as gay, bisexual, or other men who have sex with men (MSM). MSM with multiple sex partners are at greatest risk. - Shelter staff are not at high risk if they avoid prolonged face-to-face contact or skin-to-skin contact with clients with monkeypox and follow infection prevention measures outlined below.	- We will update guidance as we learn more. Stay informed: Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department Monkeypox page. - How monkeypox spreads. - CDC's monkeypox and monkeypox FAQ pages. - Share our: Monkeypox flyer. 4"x6" printable postcard.
Quickly identify people who need diagnosis and treatment. - Our Monkeypox page provides information on when to suspect monkeypox. Symptoms include a rash that looks like bumps, blisters or ulcers, and flu-like symptoms. It can look like a sexually transmitted infection like herpes. - Homeless service providers should immediately refer suspected cases to their primary care provider for diagnosis and treatment (or to an urgent care or emergency department after hours). - Healthcare providers perform monkeypox testing after a medical assessment. - Once a person has been tested for monkeypox, they are considered a suspect case and should isolate until results are received. - We are working to secure isolation services for people experiencing homelessness. If you have a client with a pending monkeypox test who has been advised to isolate, and needs support with isolation, contact us.	- Help your client get to their regular care provider or clinic. - Call (253) 649-1412 for help if your client: - Does not have a regular healthcare provider or clinic where they get care. - Has been tested for monkeypox and needs support with isolation. - You can also call Washington state's help line at (866) 397-0337.
Screen residents to identify cases. - Consider screening guests and clients for signs and symptoms of monkeypox. - Anyone with a new, unexplained rash or lesions on any part of the body should contact a healthcare provider for an evaluation. - Until a healthcare provider evaluates them, they should avoid sex or intimate gatherings especially if they involve close, personal, skin-to-skin contact or prolonged face-to-face contact.	- Develop a response plan for what you will do if have a suspected monkeypox case. See CDC guidance for congregate sites. - If staff, guests or clients do not have a healthcare provider, help get them evaluated at a primary care clinic or call us at (253) 649-1412 for help.
Practice infection control. Shelters and congregate living facilities should continue to follow routine cleaning, sanitizing and disinfection protocols. Clean and disinfect bathrooms and shared surfaces frequently.	- Review CDC guidance: Reducing monkeypox spread in congregate settings. Cleaning, disinfecting, laundry. - Ensure staff access to masks, gloves and cleaning supplies. - Ensure access to handwashing and cleaning supplies to residents. - Pay attention to handling laundry.

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Isolate people with monkeypox.	
- People with monkeypox 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. - Ideally a client with monkeypox would have a private space with access to their own bathroom. - If separating from others is not possible: - Provide the person with a well-fitting face mask. - Make sure rash and sores are covered. - Encourage frequent handwashing. - Follow guidelines for cleaning, disinfecting and handling laundry. - Help your client get evaluated by a healthcare provider. - Most congregate settings will be unable to isolate a person with monkeypox.	- If you have access to private space where a person with monkeypox can isolate, including access to their own bathroom, develop a plan for how you will monitor them. - Learn about: Isolation for people with monkeypox. CDC guidance for staff isolating at home. Cleaning, disinfection, laundry and waste disposal. - If you have questions, call us at (253) 649-1412.
Support contact tracing to identify and assess close contacts.	
- We use “contact tracing” to identify, assess, and monitor close contacts of someone with monkeypox. - Close contacts do not need to quarantine from others. They can get vaccine.	- Support our contact tracing efforts and encourage clients to cooperate. - Encourage close contacts to get vaccinated.
Treatment can minimize symptoms and severe disease.	
- There is no specific treatment for monkeypox, however monkeypox and smallpox viruses are closely related. We use the antiviral treatment Tecovirimat (TPOXX) to fight smallpox. - FDA allows CDC to use TPOXX to treat monkeypox during an outbreak. It may help prevent and treat monkeypox infection. - Healthcare providers can access treatment by coordinating with us.	- Encourage patients to talk with their healthcare provider about treatment. - Healthcare providers contact us at (253) 649-1412 or MPVclinical@tpchd.org.
A vaccine is available for close contacts and high-risk groups to prevent infection.	
- A 2-dose vaccine series (JYNNEOS) is available to help protect against the monkeypox virus. - Eligibility for vaccine can change depending on availability. Check our vaccine page for eligibility. We are working with healthcare providers and community partners to prioritize vaccination for people who may have had a high-risk exposure.	- Check our monkeypox vaccine page to: - Find up-to-date info on the vaccine. - Find out if you or your clients are eligible for a vaccine. - Learn about community-based vaccine clinics.
Communicate the facts.	
- Communicate with staff and clients about monkeypox and how it spreads through close physical contact. - Stigma is harmful. Avoid stigma by communicating fact-based information.	Read about how CDC and community partners can reduce stigma around monkeypox through your communication.

More information

- [Public Health Advisory: Monkeypox and People Experiencing Homelessness](#)—National Healthcare for the Homeless Council.
- [Safer sex, social gatherings and monkeypox](#)—CDC.
- [Monkeypox vaccination basics](#)—CDC.

Questions?

Contact our call center at (253) 649-1412. We're open Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

Find more about monkeypox at tpchd.org/monkeypox



Find more about monkeypox vaccine at tpchd.org/monkeypoxvax

