

## **Coping With Isolation: Tips for People Who Are Recovering from MPV**

You should stay home (isolate) and avoid physical contact with others if you have monkeypox (MPV) symptoms such as fever, chills, cough, sneezing, runny nose or sore throat until they go away without taking any fever-reducing or other medicine. If you do not have a fever, chills or respiratory symptoms, you do not need to isolate, and should wear a well-fitting face mask and fully cover your rashes and sores with clothing or bandages when around others or outside your home.

Coping with isolation while you have MPV can be difficult. You may feel stressed, worried or anxious. The following tips can help you cope:

### **Take Care of Yourself**

Being separated from others might feel scary, stressful or boring. Taking steps to care for your mental and physical health can help you feel better while you are isolating:

- **Remind yourself isolation is temporary.** Think about how you coped with difficult situations in the past. Assure yourself you can cope with this difficult situation too.
- **Maintain routines.** Focus on one day at a time. Maintain your daily routines as much as possible. This can help you feel in control despite the limitations on your activities.
- **Practice gratitude.** Try to find something to be grateful for every day, which can help you maintain a positive attitude.
- **Do things you enjoy.** If able, take time, even 10 to 15 minutes per day, to do things you enjoy.
- **Remain connected.** Use safe ways of communication to keep in touch with family and friends. Set times for regular check-ins.
- **See if you can work from home.** Ask your employer about leave and work-from-home options.
- **Stay informed.** Staying informed about MPV from reliable sources can help reduce your anxiety. Try to only obtain essential information.
- **Accept your feelings.** Cope at your own pace and in whichever way is best for you. Be mindful of your use of tobacco, alcohol or drugs.

### **Take Care of Your Body**

Follow your health care provider's instructions to help recover faster. Stay hydrated, eat healthy food and get enough sleep. If you feel well enough, find safe ways to exercise or stretch regularly.

### **Be Prepared for the Stress of Your Situation**

Experiencing stress reactions while in isolation is normal and expected. How people react varies from person to person. There is no right or wrong way. Stress reactions may briefly affect how you feel, think and act, but this effect should lessen and disappear after you recover from MPV.

## Most Common Stress Reactions

- **Physical:** Feeling exhausted, having trouble sleeping or eating, headaches, rapid heartbeat, dizziness, and chills and sweating not related to MPV. Stress can also worsen existing medical conditions.
- **Emotional:** Sadness, shock, disbelief, loneliness, sorrow, numbness, fear and anger.
- **Behavioral:** Not acting “like you,” being restless and argumentative, and having emotional outbursts or more conflicts than usual.
- **Thoughts:** Difficulties concentrating, remembering and making decisions.
- **Spirituality:** Questioning basic values, and withdrawing from or suddenly turning toward spiritual support.

## Manage Your Stress

Learn and use stress management strategies such as meditation, mindfulness, and breathing and muscle relaxation exercises to reduce your stress and its negative impact on you. Many mobile and streaming video applications offer free, guided exercises to support these practices. Choose exercises that fit your needs.

## Know When and Where To Find Help

You may find coping with your isolation overwhelming, or you may struggle to process the experience even after you recover physically and return to your usual activities. Prioritize seeking help if:

- **You cannot function** or feel unable to perform basic daily activities.
- **Your stress reactions linger.** If your stress reactions last longer than one month, worsen or interfere with your daily functioning, you may have a condition that requires evaluation by a health care provider.
- **You become depressed.** You may have depression if you feel persistently sad and tired, hopeless, or worthless; lose interest in things you used to enjoy; or have changes in sleep and appetite, trouble concentrating, remembering, or making decisions.
- **You are unable to cope.** For example, your healthy coping methods are no longer working, and you are coping in ways that impact your well-being, such as increasing your alcohol or drug use, overeating or undereating, or engaging in other self-destructive behaviors.
- **You have thoughts of death or suicide.** If you have thoughts of or find yourself creating plans for death or suicide, seek help immediately. If your symptoms become severe or you are thinking about harming yourself or someone else, call **911**.

NYC Well is your connection to free and confidential mental health support 24/7. Counselors can provide brief help and emotional support and connect you or your loved ones to ongoing care. Call 888-NYC-WELL (888-692-9355), text “WELL” to 65173 or chat at [nyc.gov/nycwell](https://nyc.gov/nycwell). Texting and live chat services are available in English, Spanish and Chinese. Free, over-the-phone interpretation services are available in more than 200 languages.

For more information, visit [nyc.gov/mpv](https://nyc.gov/mpv).

The NYC Health Department may change recommendations as the situation evolves.

10.13.22