



Preventing and Responding to Monkeypox in Schools, Child Care Settings and After-School Programs

This document applies to school, child care settings and after-school programs. Use the guidance in a way that makes sense for your setting. For congregate settings such as colleges and schools where people share a living space, visit [cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/specific-settings/congregate.html](https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/specific-settings/congregate.html) and health.ny.gov/Higher_Ed_FAQ. For guidance on monkeypox, including how to have safer sex, visit on.nyc.gov/monkeypox-sick-guidance.

What is monkeypox?

Monkeypox is a contagious disease caused by the monkeypox virus. It can cause sores that may look like pimples or blisters, be firm to the touch and have a dip in the center. Eventually, a scab will form on the sores, then fall off. Some people also have flu-like symptoms like fever, chills, sore throat, swollen lymph nodes, headaches and tiredness.

Do not assume someone has monkeypox if they have a rash or sores. Most rashes and sores are not caused by the monkeypox virus.

How does monkeypox spread?

Monkeypox is most often spread through direct contact with the sores of someone who has the virus. In this outbreak, the monkeypox virus has spread mainly among adults during close, intimate contact, such as during sex, kissing, cuddling and massage. Monkeypox can also spread by touching surfaces or items that have been in contact with the sores of someone who has the virus, or breathing in respiratory droplets from them while in very close contact for a prolonged period of time, including close contact sports, such as wrestling. Anyone can get monkeypox regardless of gender or sexual orientation.

What is the risk of monkeypox transmission at school, child care or after-school programs?

- The risk of monkeypox transmission is low at PreK through grade 12 schools, child care programs and after-school programs. For example, monkeypox is unlikely to spread just from being near someone with monkeypox in a classroom, office or cafeteria, or sitting next to someone with the virus on the subway or in an auditorium.
- The risk of monkeypox transmission is higher where skin-to-skin contact occurs. Very few cases have been reported in children in the U.S. Children at higher risk for exposure include those who live with someone who has monkeypox and some sexually active adolescents.

When should I suspect monkeypox in a child?

Sores are very common among children, and are usually due to bug bites, acne, allergies or other causes that are not contagious and do not require exclusion from school, child care or after-school activities. It is unlikely that a sore on a child is due to monkeypox.

Children who have new or unexplained sores should be seen by the school nurse if there is one or by their health care provider (doctor). A child who has a fever, sores and respiratory symptoms should not attend school, child care or after-school programs.

If these symptoms begin during the school day, school nurses and other adults should handle the situation like any other illness, such as a fever that arises during the school day: Separate the child from other children while waiting for the child to be picked up. Any staff member who has symptoms should leave for the day.

How should I report a confirmed case of monkeypox at my school, child care or after-school program?

Report **confirmed case** of monkeypox to the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (NYC Health Department).

- Child care programs: Contact the NYC Bureau of Childcare **borough offices** for cases among children or staff. To find your borough office's contact information, visit on.nyc.gov/child-care-boro-offices.
- School administrators:
 - To report a case in a child, speak with the School Health nurse or the supervising school nurse for your school. If your school does not have a School Health nurse, call the NYC Health Department hotline at 866-692-3641.
 - To report a case in a staff member, call the NYC Health Department hotline at 866-692-3641.

The NYC Health Department will investigate reported cases. An investigation may include contact tracing as well as follow-up testing because there have been false positives among children.

For general inquiries, call the NYC Health Department Nurse call line at 855-491-2667.

How should I notify families and staff if there is a monkeypox case in my school, child care or after-school program?

The NYC Health Department will provide a sample letter for you to use to notify families and staff if appropriate. Medical information is confidential. If you learn that a staff member or student tested positive for monkeypox, do not share this information with children, parents or other staff.

When do staff and students need to stay home if they have monkeypox?

- Staff or students with monkeypox must isolate and cannot go to school, child care or after-school programs until they have been fever-free and respiratory symptoms such as

coughing, sneezing, runny nose or sore throat have resolved without taking any fever-reducing or other medicine.

- Depending on the setting, they must also wait for all sores to heal:
 - Children and staff in programs for children who require close physical contact, such as child care programs or programs for special needs children, must stay home until all sores have healed and a new layer of skin has formed, which can take two to four weeks.
 - Children and staff in older grades in which very close physical contact is not required and the following measures can be consistently maintained can return to school or work even if they still have a sores if they:
 - Keep the sores completely covered at all times.
 - Wear a high-quality, well-fitting mask that covers their mouth and nose.
 - Avoid physical contact with others and crowded spaces.
 - Do not share personal items, food or drink.
 - Wipe the toilet seat with a disinfectant wipe after using the restroom.
 - A person who works with food, such in a school cafeteria, and has sores on their hands may not return to work until the sores have completely healed.
- If possible, employers should consider allowing employees who have rashes or sores that are still healing to work remotely or extend their sick leave.

Do staff and students need to stay home if they have been exposed to monkeypox?

- People who are exposed to monkeypox do not have to quarantine and may go to school, child care or after-school programs if they do not have monkeypox symptoms. They should check for symptoms for 21 days.
- Staff or students who develop symptoms should not go to school, child care, or after-school programs until they have been evaluated by a health care provider (doctor).

For more information visit nyc.gov/monkeypox and click on **Symptoms**.

How should I clean my school, child care or after-school program?

Maintain your usual cleaning practices. Additional cleaning is only needed if someone who is confirmed to have monkeypox was at your school or child care program while they had symptoms. Their classroom and other areas they have been in should be closed until they have been cleaned and disinfected. To protect the privacy of staff members and children who test positive for monkeypox, try to avoid cleaning their classroom or work area while other staff or children are present.

For cleaning and disinfecting guidance, visit on.nyc.gov/monkeypox-cleaning-guidance.

Vaccination

The JYNNEOS vaccine has been approved in the U.S. for the prevention of monkeypox in people who have been exposed to the monkeypox virus. The NYC Health Department will advise people identified as close contacts of someone who has monkeypox whether vaccination is recommended and, if so, help them get vaccinated. Vaccines are free in NYC regardless of your immigration status, insurance status or ability to pay.

Beyond Monkeypox: Help Keep Your Classroom Healthy

The risk of monkeypox is low, but you can also take steps to reduce the spread of other infections in your school, child care and after-school programs by reminding staff and families to:

- Stay home when sick.
- Wash hands regularly with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Maintain regular cleaning and disinfection practices.
- Set aside a place where children who are sick can wait to be picked up by their parent or caregiver.

For more information, visit nyc.gov/monkeypox.

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

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