



Mpox Toolkit for School and Early Care and Education Programs

Background

Since May 14, 2022, mpox has been spreading from person to person in countries where the virus is usually not found, including the United States. On June 30, 2022, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) identified the first case of mpox in a Wisconsin resident. DHS continues to work with federal, state, and local partners to investigate and monitor the current outbreak of mpox in Wisconsin to prevent further transmission. To find up-to-date data about how the mpox outbreak is affecting Wisconsinites, visit the [DHS Mpox Data webpage](#).

Mpox is characterized by a new, unexplained rash and skin lesions. Mpox does not spread easily from person to person. Someone must have close, sustained contact with an infected person to become sick. In the current outbreak, most new cases of mpox have been associated with sexual contact. However, mpox can also be spread through respiratory droplets and by touching objects and surfaces that have been contaminated by someone with mpox. A person who is sick with mpox can spread the virus until all sores have healed and a fresh layer of skin has formed.

DHS wants K-12 schools and early care and education (ECE) settings to know that the risk of children and adolescents getting sick with mpox is currently low. However, DHS encourages K-12 schools and ECE settings to [proactively plan](#) for mpox.

Strategies for Preventing the Spread of Mpox in School and ECE Settings

School and ECE settings should follow their everyday operational guidance to help prevent the spread of mpox.

- **Follow standard procedures for [cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting](#) in school and ECE settings.** Routinely clean and disinfect surfaces at least once a day to reduce the risk of germs spreading.
- **Ensure staff and students have access to soap and water for washing hands.** Make hand sanitizer (60% alcohol or higher) readily available, if possible. Handwashing should be encouraged before eating, after using the restroom, and after touching high touch surfaces.
- **Limit the sharing of personal items including:**
 - Bedding
 - Clothing
 - Towels
 - Eating utensils
 - Cups
- **Encourage staff and students to stay home and contact their health care provider if they have a fever, undiagnosed rash, or other [symptoms of mpox infection](#).** Mpox symptoms include:
 - Rash
 - Fever
 - Swollen lymph nodes
 - Muscle aches
 - Chills
- **Proactively identify private spaces away from others for the assessment students or staff who may be sick.**

- **Ensure appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) is available for staff, volunteers, and students who have contact with students and staff who are suspected of having mpox.**

Strategies for Managing Potential Exposure Within Schools and ECE Settings

If someone worked at or attended a school or ECE setting **while infectious with mpox**, administrators should take the following actions:

- **Work with your local health department (LTHD) to respond to any suspect or confirmed cases and known exposures.**
 - If a student or staff reports to school or ECE setting with an undiagnosed rash or sores, they should be Isolated until they can be safely sent home and tested by a doctor or other health care provider.
 - Confirmed mpox cases should remain out of school or ECE until the rash has fully resolved, the scabs have fallen off, and a fresh layer of intact skin has formed.
 - Collaborate with your LTHD to identify people who may have been exposed to mpox. Exposed individuals should monitor for symptoms for 21 days from their date of last exposure to mpox.
 - Staff and students who were exposed to mpox can continue daily activities if they do not develop any new symptoms.
 - People who have been exposed to someone with mpox may be eligible to receive a vaccine to help prevent the onset of disease or reduce the severity of symptoms.
 - Anyone who develops mpox symptoms during their monitoring period should stay home and notify their local health department.
- **Work with your LTHD to determine the best approach to communicating with students and staff if a confirmed case is identified. Provide clear information about mpox prevention and exposure when you inform students and staff.**
 - A sample letter with resources that can be shared can be found on page 3.
 - Additional resources can be found on the [DHS website](#).
 - ECE programs should follow established reporting guidelines for notifying their licensing or certification specialist and notifying parents of children who were exposed when applicable.
- **Clean and disinfect spaces that were occupied by a person with mpox using a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) registered disinfectant.** Follow the manufacturer’s directions for concentration, contact time, and handling and care.
 - Avoid cleaning and disinfecting activities that could spread dried material from lesions (use of fans, dry dusting, sweeping, or vacuuming) in contaminated areas.
 - Any soiled linens or laundry should be washed using regular detergent and warm water. Contaminated linens should be gently placed in a laundry bag and handled in a way that does not spread any infectious materials (not shaken or thrown).
- **Provide appropriate PPE for staff, volunteers, and students who may be at risk of being exposed to mpox.** PPE should be worn in the following circumstances:
 - When handling dirty laundry from people with known or suspected mpox virus infection, staff should wear a gown, gloves, eye protection, and a well-fitting mask or respirator. PPE is not necessary after the laundry has been washed.
 - Staff should wear a gown, gloves, eye protection, and well-fitting mask or respiratory when cleaning areas where people with mpox virus spent.
- **Ensure staff and students have access to soap and water for washing hands.** Make hand sanitizer (60% alcohol or higher) readily available, if possible.
 - Anyone who touches lesions or clothing, linens, or surfaces that may have been contaminated by mpox should wash their hands immediately.

Template Letter for Students and ECE Settings: About Mpox and How to Stay Protected

[date]

Dear [parents and guardians],

School districts, local health departments, community partners, and individuals are all working together to keep students and their families safe. With the number of mpox cases increasing across the U.S. and in Wisconsin, we understand parents, guardians, teachers, and students may have questions about what mpox is and how it may affect them. While mpox is very different than COVID-19, [administrators/school officials/ECE staff] have learned many lessons over the past two years to prevent the spread of infectious disease to keep students and staff safe.

The risk of children and adolescents getting sick with mpox is currently low. Mpox does not spread easily to others. It is also significantly less contagious than COVID-19. In the current outbreak, most new cases have reported prolonged close or intimate contact with someone else who has mpox. In rare cases, mpox can also spread through respiratory droplets. It can also be spread by touching objects and surfaces that have been contaminated by someone with mpox (such as bedding, towels, toothbrushes, or utensils).

We want staff and students to know that the risk of mpox spreading widely among children remains low. Ensuring the health and safety of everyone attending [school/ECE] remains our top priority. We will work with [LTHD] to communicate any relevant information to parents and guardians if a case is identified and what it means for their children.

To prevent the spread of mpox, we encourage parents and guardians, students, and community members to take precautions outlined below. As a general reminder, please keep your child home if they are not feeling well for any reason. This benefits everyone's health and safety. If you have any questions, please call a doctor or health care provider, or [Full name and position] at [phone #].

What are symptoms of mpox?

- **Mpox is characterized by new or unexplained rash.** The rash can turn into sores that can be very painful. Other common symptoms include:
 - Fever
 - Chills
 - Swollen lymph nodes
 - Muscle aches
- Some people develop a rash without other symptoms. Symptoms usually start 4 to 14 days after being exposed to the virus.

How can you protect your family against mpox?

- Avoid close, skin-to-skin contact with people who have a rash that looks like mpox. This includes intimate contact, like hugging, kissing, or other skin-to-skin contact.
- Avoid sharing objects like bedding, towels, clothing, or utensils with someone who has mpox.
- Consider limiting the number of intimate skin-to-skin encounters or events with a large number of people where close skin-to-skin contact can occur.
- Wash your hands often or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

- Contact a doctor or other health care provider if you think you or your child have been exposed, ask about testing, and stay home if you have symptoms.

What should you do if you or your child has a new rash or other mpox symptoms?

- Contact a doctor or other health care provider and ask about testing.
- Isolate away from others.
- Avoid skin-to-skin contact with others. This include avoiding intimate contact, like hugging, kissing, or touching.
- Contact people you or your child have had close, personal, or intimate contact with in the last 21 days if you test positive.
- Cover all areas of the exposed rash and wear a well-fitting mask or respirator when you need to be around others.
- Remember to wash or disinfect any objects or surfaces you may have touched.

What should you do if you or your child is exposed to someone with mpox?

- Monitor for symptoms for 21 days after your date of last exposure. It is important to check your temperature two times per day during monitoring period.
- Contact a doctor or other health care provider, isolate away from others, and ask about testing if you develop any new symptoms.
- People who have been exposed to someone with mpox may be eligible to receive a vaccine to help prevent the onset of disease or reduce the severity of symptoms.
- You or your child can continue to daily activities if you do not develop any new symptoms.

Where can I find more information?

- <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/mpox/101.htm>
- <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/mpox/data.htm>
- <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/mpox/vaccine.htm>
- <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/mpox/resources.htm>
- <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/mpox/index.htm>
- <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p03284.pdf>
- <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p03291.pdf>
- <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p03291.pdf>
- <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p03287.pdf>

Template Letter: Case of Mpox Detected In K-12 School or ECE Setting

[date]

Dear [Insert parent/guardian names],

This letter is to notify you that [a] (teacher/staff member/student[s]) at [name of school/ECE] has tested positive for mpox. The case[s] is[are] currently isolating, and we are actively working with the [insert county/city] Health Department to identify and notify any close contacts who may be at risk of getting sick. We are also cleaning and disinfecting all common areas to control the spread of illness.

We want to remind parents, guardians, and students that mpox does not spread easily from person to person and the risk of getting mpox remains low. However, if you or your child is identified as a close contact and develops any symptoms of mpox, we encourage you to contact a doctor or health care provider, ask about testing, and stay away from others. People who have been exposed to someone with mpox may be [eligible](#) to receive a vaccine to help prevent the onset of disease or reduce the severity of symptoms

About Mpox:

Mpox is a viral infection that is characterized by a new, unexplained rash and skin lesions. Mpox can spread to anyone through close, often skin-to-skin contact. This includes intimate contact, such as hugging, kissing, or touching. Other common symptoms include:

- Fever
- Chills
- Swollen lymph nodes
- Muscle aches

More information about mpox can be found by visiting: [Mpox in Wisconsin | Wisconsin Department of Health Services](#)

Prevent Further Spread:

The following guidelines will help to prevent further spread of mpox at our [school/program]:

- Avoid close, skin-to-skin contact with people who have a rash that looks like mpox. This includes intimate contact, like hugging, kissing, or touching.
- Avoid sharing objects like bedding, towels, clothing, or utensils with someone who has mpox.
- Consider limiting the number of intimate skin-to-skin encounters or events with a large number of people where close skin-to-skin contact can occur.
- Wash your hands often or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Contact a doctor or other health care provider if you think you have been exposed, ask about testing, and stay home if you have symptoms.

If you have any questions, please call [Full name and position] at [phone #].

Sincerely,

[Print name, Title]

Additional Resources:

DHS Websites:

- <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/mpox/101.htm>
- <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/mpox/data.htm>
- <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/mpox/vaccine.htm>
- <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/mpox/resources.htm>
- <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/mpox/index.htm>

DHS Fact Sheets:

- <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p03284.pdf>
- <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p03291.pdf>
- <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p03291.pdf>
- <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p03287.pdf>

CDC Websites:

- <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/mpox/index.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/mpox/symptoms.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/mpox/prevention.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/mpox/if-you-are-sick.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/mpox/vaccines.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/mpox/treatment.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/mpox/sexualhealth/index.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/mpox/community/school-faq.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/mpox/specific-settings/congregate.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/mpox/specific-settings/congregate.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/mpox/resources/index.html>

CDC Fact Sheets:

- <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/mpox/pdf/MPOX-info-teens-young-adults.pdf>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/mpox/pdf/Mpox-SaferSex-InfoSheet-508.pdf>
- https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/mpox/pdf/Mpox_Stigma_508.pdf