

# FOR PATIENTS: WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE SICK WITH MPOX



The type of treatment for a person with human monkeypox (MPOX) will depend on how sick someone gets or whether they are likely to get severely ill. Most people recover fully within 2 to 4 weeks without the need for treatment.

## Taking Care of Yourself

- Use gauze or bandages to cover the rash to limit spread to others and to the environment.
- Do not lance (pop) or scratch lesions from the rash. This does not speed up recovery and can spread the virus to other parts of the body, increase the chance of spreading the virus to others, and possibly cause the open lesions to become infected by bacteria.
- Do not shave the area with the rash until the scabs have fallen off and a new layer of skin has formed.
- Keep skin lesions/rash clean and dry when not showering or bathing.
- Wash hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, especially after direct contact with the rash.
- If you have rash on your hands:
  - Be careful when washing or using sanitizer so as not to irritate the rash.
  - Wear gloves that are non-irritating when handling common objects or touching surfaces in shared spaces.
  - Use disposable gloves that can be discarded after each use.
- Wear a well-fitting mask around other people until the rash and all other symptoms have resolved.
- Eat healthy and get plenty of rest to allow your body to heal.

## Managing Your Symptoms

- Medicines like ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) and acetaminophen (Tylenol) can help you feel better.
- For rash in the mouth, rinse with salt water at least four times a day. Prescription mouthwashes or local anesthetics like viscous lidocaine can be used to manage pain. Oral antiseptics like chlorhexidine mouthwash can be used to help keep the mouth clean.
- Contact your healthcare provider if pain becomes severe and unmanageable at home.

## Rash Relief

- The most important thing is to try to not touch or scratch the rash. Doing this can spread the rash to other parts of the body, increase the chance of spreading the virus to others, and possibly cause open lesions to become infected by bacteria. If you do accidentally touch the rash, wash your hands with soap and water and avoid touching sensitive areas like your eyes, nose, mouth, genitals, and rectum or anus.
- Topical benzocaine/lidocaine gels can be used for temporary relief. Oral antihistamines, such as Benadryl, and topical creams, such as calamine lotion or petroleum jelly, may help with itching.
- Soaking in a warm bath (using oatmeal or other over-the-counter bath products for itchy skin) may offer some relief to the dry, itchy sensations that can come with the rash.
- People who have the rash in or around their anus or genitals (penis, testicles, labia, vagina), or perineum (taint) may also benefit from a sitz-bath (a warm, shallow bath). Your healthcare provider may prescribe medication like povidone-iodine or other products to be added to the water. Adding Epsom salt, vinegar, or baking soda to the water can be soothing.

Some people, like those with a weakened immune system or genital or rectal rashes, may need treatment. Drugs used to treat MPOX require a prescription and must be requested by a healthcare provider. If you do not have a healthcare provider, call 2-1-1 or 7-1-1 (hearing impaired).



For updates, text COSD MONKEYPOX to 468-311. For resources, visit:

[SanDiegoCounty.gov/monkeypoxSD](https://SanDiegoCounty.gov/monkeypoxSD)



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