



Mpox Communications Toolkit

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 in order to prevent further transmission. Colleges and universities should use this toolkit to communicate about mpox and how students and staff can protect themselves.

DHS encourages colleges and universities to proactively plan for mpox on campus. Campus health officials should follow [guidance for congregate settings](#) from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) and plan for the following actions:

- Determine testing locations for students or staff who are symptomatic.
- Identify isolation areas on campus for students who have results pending or have mpox.
- Ensure personal protective equipment and cleaning/disinfectant products are available.
- Monitor vaccine eligibility requirements for pre and post exposure prophylaxis to prevent mpox.

Answers to Frequently Asked Questions:

Question	Answer
What is mpox?	Mpox is a rare but potentially serious viral illness. The mpox virus is from the same family of viruses as the smallpox virus. Mpox symptoms are similar to smallpox symptoms but are less severe. It is also less transmissible than smallpox and rarely fatal. 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.
What are the symptoms of mpox?	Mpox is typically characterized by a new, unexplained rash that develops into characteristic hard, round, fluid- or pus-filled skin lesions. Other early symptoms include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fever • Swollen lymph nodes • Muscle aches • Headache <p>The mpox rash develops within one to three days after fever. However, some people may experience a rash or sores first, followed by other symptoms. Some people may also only develop a rash.</p>
Is mpox deadly?	The type of mpox virus currently spreading is rarely fatal. It is estimated that over 99% of people who become infected with this type of mpox virus will survive. However, people with a weakened immune system, history of eczema, people who are pregnant or breastfeeding, and children under 8 years old may be at a higher risk for experiencing severe disease and death.
What should I do if I have symptoms?	It is important for anyone experiencing a new, unexplained rash to notify a doctor. If possible, call ahead before going to a health care facility and notify them that

	<p>you are concerned about mpox. If you have mpox symptoms, talk with a healthcare provider, ask about getting tested for mpox, isolate at home, and avoid close physical contact until a health care provider can examine you.</p> <p>If you need assistance finding a free or low-cost health care provider, you are encouraged to call 211 or visit https://211wisconsin.communityos.org/ for support.</p>
<p>What should I do if I test positive for mpox?</p>	<p>If you test positive for mpox, stay isolated away from others and avoid intimate contact (kissing, touching, any kind of sex) while you are sick. Do not share objects like bedding, towels, clothing or utensils with others while you have symptoms. Be sure to wash or disinfect any items that came in contact with bodily fluids or a lesion. If possible, do not share a bathroom with others. Stay home until any rash has fully resolved, the scabs have fallen off, and a fresh layer of skin has formed.</p>
<p>How can I prevent mpox?</p>	<p>Most people with mpox report having prolonged close contact with someone with mpox. Mpox is unlikely to spread through the air over long distances because the virus is not known to linger in the air. To protect yourself from mpox, take the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wash your hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. • Ask your sexual partner(s) if they have a rash or other mpox related symptoms. • Avoid skin-to-skin contact, including sex and intimate contact, with someone who has a rash or other symptoms. • Consider how much close, skin-to-skin contact is likely to occur at the event you plan to attend. • Do not share objects like bedding, towels, clothing, or utensils with someone with mpox.
<p>Is mpox contagious?</p>	<p>Mpox does not spread easily from person to person. People must have close sustained contact with an infected person to get the virus. Mpox can spread through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respiratory or oral secretions • Close physical contact • Touching sores or body fluids • Touching personal belongings that have had contact with sores. <p>If you are attending a large event or festival, consider how much close, personal, skin to skin contact is likely to occur to help prevent the spread of mpox. Mpox can also spread to people from animals through bites, scratches, preparation of meat, or use of a product from an infected animal.</p>
<p>What should I do if I had contact with someone who has mpox?</p>	<p>If you were exposed to 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 your monitoring period. If symptoms begin, contact a doctor immediately and isolate away from others. You can continue daily activities, like going to work or school, if you do not develop any new symptoms.</p> <p>If your partner has mpox, avoid sex or being intimate until all sores have healed and a fresh layer of skin has formed. Remember to wash any bedding, towels, or clothing that have had contact with the infectious rash or body fluids. Standard household cleaning products and EPA-registered disinfectants should be used to wash any surfaces that have been touched by someone with mpox.</p>

	<p>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. See “Is there a vaccine available?” below.</p>
How is mpox treated?	<p>Most people who have mpox recover without needing treatment within 2-4 weeks. While there is no specific treatment for mpox, antiviral medications that have been used to treat smallpox can also be used. People who have been exposed to someone with mpox may receive a vaccine depending on their level of exposure to prevent the onset of disease. DHS will work with doctors, local and Tribal health departments, and other health care providers to obtain vaccines and treatments when necessary.</p>
Can my pet get mpox?	<p>The CDC does not believe that mpox poses a high risk to pets. However, mpox is zoonotic, which means it can spread between animals and people. People with mpox should avoid contact with animals, including pets, domestic animals, and wildlife to prevent the spread of the virus.</p> <p>If you have pets, learn more about what do if you or someone in your home has mpox.</p>
What vaccines are available in the United States to prevent mpox?	<p>Two smallpox vaccines licensed by the FDA are available to prevent mpox: JYNNEOS, also known as Imvamune or Imvanex, and ACAM2000.</p>
Am I eligible to get vaccinated?	<p>Due to a limited vaccine supply, DHS is currently following the federal government’s recommendation to prioritize the JYNNEOS vaccine for individuals at the highest risk of infection.</p> <p>In Wisconsin, vaccination is now recommended for people who had known exposure to someone with mpox and people with certain risk factors who are more likely to be exposed to the virus. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who know that a sexual partner in the past 14 days was diagnosed with mpox. • People who attended an event or venue where there was known mpox exposure. • Gay men, bisexual men, trans men and women, any men who have sex with men, and gender non-conforming/non-binary individuals, who have had multiple sexual partners in the last 14 days. <p>People 18 years and older can receive JYNNEOS as either an injection between the skin (intradermally) or beneath the skin (subcutaneously). People under the age of 18 can receive JYNNEOS only as an injection beneath the skin (subcutaneously).</p> <p>As the outbreak changes and more vaccine becomes available, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services will update the eligibility requirements.</p>
Where can I go to make an appointment?	<p>The JYNNEOS vaccine is currently only available by appointment at designated health care locations. Please visit the DHS website to see a list of locations accepting appointments. If you are eligible for JYNNEOS and unable to make an appointment, your local health department can assist with connecting you to a mpox vaccinator.</p>
Can JYNNEOS be given after I was exposed to mpox?	<p>Yes. To help prevent the onset of disease, JYNNEOS should be administered within four days from the date of exposure to the mpox virus. If the vaccine is administered between four to 14 days after the date of exposure, getting vaccinated may help reduce the severity of symptoms associated with mpox infection.</p>

<p>Who should not be given the JYNNEOS vaccine?</p>	<p>People should speak with a health care provider to discuss if the JYNNEOS vaccine is safe for them if they have had:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An allergic reaction to a previous dose of JYNNEOS, OR • An allergic reaction to an ingredient (gentamicin, ciprofloxacin, egg protein, benzonase). <p>People should also talk to a health care provider about getting vaccinated if they have any of the following conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Severe, life-threatening allergies. • Are pregnant, think they can be pregnant, or breastfeeding. • Have a weakened immune system.
<p>How is the JYNNEOS vaccine administered?</p>	<p>The JYNNEOS vaccine is a two dose vaccine series. The CDC recommends that the second dose is administered at least four weeks after the first. JYNNEOS can be administered either under the skin (intradermal injection) or into underlying fat (subcutaneous injection).</p> <p>People 18 years and older can receive JYNNEOS as either an injection under the skin (intradermally) or into underlying fat (subcutaneously). People under the age of 18 can receive JYNNEOS only as an injection under the skin (subcutaneously).</p>
<p>Is it safe to get the JYNNEOS vaccine if I am pregnant, think I could be pregnant, or breastfeeding?</p>	<p>It is unknown if pregnant people are more susceptible to mpox infection or more severe disease during pregnancy. However, the mpox virus can be transmitted to the unborn baby and to the newborn through close contact during and after birth. The JYNNEOS vaccine should be offered to people who are pregnant or breastfeeding if they are exposed to mpox. People who are pregnant or breastfeeding are encouraged to talk with a health care provider about the risks and benefits of getting vaccinated.</p>
<p>What are the side effects?</p>	<p>Most people who get the JYNNEOS will have minor side effects, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pain • Redness • Swelling • Firmness or itching where the shot was given. <p>Some people will also experience muscle pain, headaches, nausea, chills, fatigue, or fever after getting vaccinated. Severe allergic reactions may occur but are rare.</p>

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

[date]

Dear [student body],

[Insert Institution] is working closely with the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) and [Local or Tribal Health Dept] to monitor the current outbreak of mpox. While this outbreak is very different from the coronavirus pandemic, university officials and public health leaders have learned many lessons over the past two years to prevent the spread of infectious disease to keep students and staff safe.

Although mpox is a viral infection, it does not spread easily to others and is significantly less contagious than COVID-19. Most people with mpox report having prolonged close contact, including kissing, hugging, and sexual activity, with someone else who has mpox. Mpox can also spread through respiratory droplets and by having contact with items that have been contaminated with the fluids or sores of a person with mpox (e.g., bedding, towels, toothbrushes, or sex toys).

We want students to know that the risk of mpox spreading widely throughout [community/campus] remains low. To date, [X] cases have been reported in Wisconsin residents. While most cases are occurring in the sexual network of gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men, we want to reiterate that mpox can affect anyone. All students should be aware of the signs and symptoms of mpox and contact the [wellness center] or a doctor if they develop a new or unexplained rash.

Anyone who has direct contact with an infected person can become sick with mpox. Again, a person's sexuality and sexual orientation is not the route of transmission. Blaming one community as the cause of any disease harms public health efforts and reinforces stigma and discrimination.

To maintain the health and wellbeing of [insert student body/students], we will work together with state and local public health officials to combat the mpox outbreak. If you have any questions, please call [Full name and position] at [phone #].

Sincerely,

[Print name, Title]

What are the symptoms:

- **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 to protect yourself from 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 having sex.
- 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 the [health center] or a doctor if you think you have been exposed, ask about testing, and stay home if you have symptoms.

What to do if you have a new rash or other mpox symptoms:

- Contact the [health center] or a doctor and ask about testing.
- Isolate away from others.
- Avoid skin-to-skin contact with others. This include avoiding intimate contact, like hugging, kissing, or having sex.
- Contact people you have had close, personal, or sexual contact with in the last 21 days to inform them you are experiencing mpox symptoms or tested 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 to do if you were 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 the [health center] or a doctor, 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 can continue to daily activities if you do not develop any new symptoms.

Additional resources:

- [Mpox Virus](#)
- [Mpox: What Everyone Needs to Know to Prevent the Spread](#)
- [Mpox: Symptom Monitoring](#)
- [Mpox in Wisconsin | Wisconsin Department of Health Services](#)
- [Mpox: Basic Information | Wisconsin Department of Health Services](#)
- [Mpox: Vaccine Information | Wisconsin Department of Health Services](#)
- [Mpox: Communications Resources | Wisconsin Department of Health Services](#)

Template Letter: Case of Mpox Detected on Campus

[date]

Dear [Insert parent/guardian names],

This letter is to notify you that [a] student[s] 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 common areas to control the spread of illness.

We want to remind students that mpox does not spread easily from person to person and the risk of getting mpox remains low.

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 kissing, touching, and any kind of sex.

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 having sex.
- 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 the [health center] or a doctor 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]

Key Messages for College Wellness Centers:

Mpox is a viral disease that is characterized by new or unexplained rash. Person to person transmission does not occur easily. Most people who are infected with mpox report having prolonged close or intimate contact with someone else with mpox. This includes intimate contact such as having sex, kissing, or hugging. People can also become infected through respiratory droplets and by having contact with items that have been contaminated with the fluids or sores of a person with mpox.

While most cases are occurring in the sexual network of gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men, anyone who is exposed to mpox can become infected. A person is considered infectious until the rash has fully healed with a fresh layer of skin. People who are infected with mpox should remain isolated until they are no longer infectious.

DHS encourages colleges and universities to proactively plan for mpox on campus:

- Determine testing locations for students or staff who are symptomatic.
- Identify isolation areas on campus for students who have mpox results pending or have mpox.
- Ensure personal protective equipment and cleaning/disinfectant products are available.
- Monitor vaccine eligibility requirements for pre and post exposure prophylaxis to prevent mpox.

If mpox has been identified, campus health officials should follow [guidance for congregate settings](#) from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) and consider the following actions:

- Communicate with staff, volunteers, and residents by providing clear information about mpox prevention.
- Respond to cases and identify people who might have been exposed to mpox.
 - Isolate students who have mpox until they are fully recovered.
 - Isolation spaces should have a dedicated bathroom.
 - Multiple people who test positive for mpox can stay in the same room.
 - Reduce the number of staff who enter the isolation area.
 - Ensure proper waste management from the isolation area.
- Ensure access to handwashing.
- Clean and disinfect the areas where people with mpox spent time.
- Provide appropriate personal protective equipment for staff, volunteers, and residents who may be at risk of being exposed to mpox.

Additional Resources:

DHS Websites:

- [Mpox in Wisconsin | Wisconsin Department of Health Services](#)
- [Mpox: Basic Information | Wisconsin Department of Health Services](#)
- [Mpox: Vaccine Information | Wisconsin Department of Health Services](#)
- [Mpox: Information for Health Care Professionals | Wisconsin Department of Health Services](#)
- [Mpox: Communications Resources | Wisconsin Department of Health Services](#)

CDC Websites:

- [Mpox | Poxvirus | CDC](#)
- [Signs and Symptoms | Mpox | Poxvirus | CDC](#)
- [Prevention | Mpox | Poxvirus | CDC](#)
- [If You Are Sick | Mpox | Poxvirus | CDC](#)
- [Vaccines | Mpox | Poxvirus | CDC](#)
- [Treatment | Mpox | Poxvirus | CDC](#)

- [Safer Sex, Social Gatherings, and Mpox | Mpox | Poxvirus | CDC](#)
- [Congregate Living Settings | Mpox | Poxvirus | CDC](#)
- [Communication Resources | Mpox | Poxvirus | CDC](#)

DHS Fact Sheets:

- [Mpox Virus \(wisconsin.gov\)](#)
- [Mpox: What Everyone Needs to Know to Prevent the Spread](#)
- [Mpox: Symptom Monitoring \(wisconsin.gov\)](#)

CDC Fact Sheets:

- [What You Need to Know about Mpox if You are a Teen or Young Adult \(cdc.gov\)](#)
- [Mpox and Safer Sex \(cdc.gov\)](#)
- [Reducing Stigma in Mpox Communication and Community Engagement \(cdc.gov\)](#)