

# BRIEFING PAPER: MPOX ISOLATION AND RECOVERY

29 July 2025

## *Overview*

Mpox is a viral infection that spreads through direct contact with a person or animal that has mpox or contact with mpox-contaminated materials. To prevent transmission, a person with mpox should isolate at home and avoid contact with people and animals from the time they believe that they have mpox or have been diagnosed with mpox until they have fully recovered and have been cleared by their healthcare provider. Cleaning and disinfection during and after isolation are important components of transmission prevention.

## *Home care for mpox while isolating*

Most people who acquire mpox in Australia will experience only mild illness and will not require specific treatment. A person with mpox should contact their healthcare provider for additional advice if:

- They may have acquired mpox overseas or from someone who acquired it overseas
- They or a member of their household is pregnant; is a child; has a condition that weakens the immune system, such as cancer or untreated uncontrolled HIV; or is taking immunosuppressive medication.

While isolating at home, a person with mpox should stay hydrated and eat nutritious foods; rest and get enough sleep; and use over-the-counter medications to treat pain and fever if advised by their healthcare provider.

Mpox lesions should be left dry and uncovered whenever possible to support healing. The person should avoid scratching, which can lead to infections and scarring; and should take warm (not hot) baths and showers as hot water can aggravate the lesions. They should use antiseptic/antibacterial medication only if advised by their healthcare provider: uninfected mpox lesions do not need or benefit from these medications.

They should contact their healthcare provider if their symptoms change or worsen, including:

- Lesions becoming more painful or showing signs of becoming infected
- Onset or worsening of fever, nausea or vomiting

- Inability to eat or drink
- Difficulty breathing
- Feeling dizzy or confused.

### *Isolating at home*

A person with mpox should isolate at home, separated from other people and animals. They should not go to work, school or any public indoor or outdoor areas. They should ask family or friends to do their shopping or use a delivery service, and have the items left outside their home (no-contact delivery). They should abstain from all intimate contact and sexual intercourse, including with members of their household.

They should only leave home isolation for essential purposes like emergencies or urgent health, wellbeing or safety issues. If this is required, they should ensure that any visible mpox lesions are covered with bandages and/or clothing; wear a medical mask (ideally an N95 or a KN95) at all times; and avoid close contact with others.

### *Isolating from other people in the household*

It is important for the person with mpox to isolate from other members of their household. They should avoid all physical contact and try to stay at least one metre away from others at all times. If they must interact with others, they should wear a well-fitting medical mask (ideally an N95 or a KN95) and cover any visible mpox lesions with clothing or gauze bandages.

They should sleep and remain in their own separate room, with a window open when possible. If a separate room is not available, they should block off part of a shared room with a screen or curtain to create distance from others. They should not share their bed or sleeping area with other people or animals.

They should use a separate bathroom from the rest of the household if possible; if this is not possible, they should clean and disinfect the bathroom per the [cleaning and disinfection](#) instructions after every use. Similarly, they should prepare and eat food in a separate room if possible; if this is not possible, they should use the space(s) only when no one else is nearby and follow the [cleaning and disinfection](#) instructions after every use of the space(s).

They should not share any items (e.g., cups, glasses, dishware, cutlery, towels, linens, toothbrushes, soap and razors) with other household members; ideally, they should use dedicated items and store their items separately. They should also avoid sitting on shared household furnishings if possible; if this is not

possible, they should cover the furnishings with a clean sheet or blanket before using them and launder the sheet/blanket after every use per the instructions in the [laundry](#) section. They should not shake out the sheet/blanket as this may spread the virus.

Mpox can be transmitted between humans and animals, so a person with mpox should avoid contact with animals as much as possible, and should thoroughly wash their hands before and after handling animals and their equipment (such as collars, leads, leashes and harnesses; food, water and bowls; litter and litter trays; beds and bedding; and toys).

### *Hygiene*

The person with mpox should maintain hygiene procedures throughout the isolation period, including:

- Cleaning their hands regularly with soap and water or alcohol-based handrub, especially before and after eating; using the toilet; cleaning and disinfecting surfaces and toilets; washing laundry; handling waste; or removing gloves and medical masks
- Covering their mouth and nose with disposable tissues when coughing or sneezing
- Disposing of waste (such as bandages, medical masks, tissues and gloves) safely per the [rubbish and disposal](#) instructions

### *Ending isolation*

A person with mpox should isolate at home until all of the following conditions have been met:

- No fever for at least 72 hours
- No new lesions in the previous 48 hours
- All lesions have scabbed over
- Any lesions on face, arms and hands have *fully healed*\*
- No oral lesions
- Their healthcare provider has approved an end to isolation.

\* For the purposes of this document, *fully healed* means that the mpox lesions have scabbed over, the scabs have fallen off, and a fresh layer of skin has formed underneath

### *Resuming contact with other people and animals*

The person with mpox or their caregiver should perform a thorough [cleaning and disinfection](#) of all household areas and items before allowing anyone (including household members) to enter them.

Until all mpox lesions have fully healed, people with mpox should avoid:

- Close contact (e.g., hugging, kissing, prolonged face-to-face contact in closed spaces) with all people and animals
- All contact with children under the age of 13 and anyone who is immunosuppressed or pregnant.

### *Resuming intimate/sexual activities*

A person with mpox should not resume intimate/sexual activities until all lesions on their genitals and anus have fully healed. Their healthcare provider may also advise a full STI screening.

It is not known if the mpox virus can spread through sexual body fluids, so condom use is advised for 12 weeks after all lesions have fully healed to reduce the risk of transmission.

### *Caregivers*

If the person with mpox is a child or is otherwise unable to perform tasks for themselves, they may need help from a caregiver. The caregiver should be an adult in good health and ideally be vaccinated against mpox or have previously recovered from it. Pregnant people, immunosuppressed people and people in vulnerable groups should avoid caregiving.

The caregiver should check on the person with mpox regularly to ensure that their condition is stable or improving; that they are drinking fluids regularly and eating nutritious food; and that they have everything they need. If the caregiver undertakes any cleaning, they should follow the [cleaning and disinfection](#) instructions and wear personal protective equipment – including disposable gloves, a medical mask and eye protection – at all times.

To protect themselves, the caregiver should:

- Stay at least one metre from the person with mpox whenever possible; if this is not possible, wear a well-fitting medical mask (ideally an N95 or a KN95) and disposable gloves
- Clean their hands frequently with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitiser
- Contact a healthcare provider if mpox symptoms appear or if they have questions or need support.

### *Cleaning and disinfection*

To avoid spreading the virus, cleaning should be performed only by the person with mpox or their caregiver. When cleaning, they should wear single-use disposable gloves and wash their hands well after taking gloves off. They should change gloves between tasks.

Surfaces need to be cleaned first with a detergent (for example, soap and water), then with a disinfectant (for example, bleach solution). An alternative is a combined cleaning and disinfection wipe or solution, such as the combination cleaning and disinfection wipes available at supermarkets. Dry methods of cleaning (e.g., dusting, vacuuming) should be avoided because these can spread the virus through the air.

### *Hard surfaces and equipment*

Surfaces in the area where the person with mpox is staying should be cleaned at least daily, using household cleaning products and disinfectants. Any surfaces in shared areas (including baths, showers and toilets) should be cleaned after each use by the person with mpox or their caregiver, using household cleaning products and disinfectants.

Dishes and cutlery used by the person with mpox should be washed separately. If possible, wash them in a dishwasher using hot water (over 60°C) and detergent; otherwise, wash by hand using washing-up liquid and warm water, and wearing single-use disposable gloves.

Use alcohol wipes to clean equipment like mobile phones, tablets and keyboards.

### *Laundry*

Laundry items worn or used by the person with mpox should be stored and washed separately. Dirty items should be transported to the washing machine in a disposable bag to avoid spreading virus particles, and should be handled with disposable gloves. Clean items should not be put back into the dirty bag.

### *Rubbish and disposal*

Place rubbish into a disposable rubbish bag; then place that rubbish bag into a second disposable bag and dispose of it with the usual domestic waste. Wash hands afterwards.

All waste should be disposed of in rubbish, not in recycling, until the isolation period has ended

### *Community health messaging*

People may not be aware that they need to isolate when they suspect that they have mpox or have been diagnosed with mpox. It is important to communicate the need for isolation and to emphasise that isolation is about protecting other people (particularly vulnerable people) as well as themselves and maintaining a culture of care in our communities.

Community members need to understand that they should isolate from the time they suspect that they may have mpox and should not wait for a diagnosis to start isolation. They should contact their healthcare provider for testing/diagnosis advice and to obtain a medical certificate for time off from work and/or work from home accommodations as appropriate to their situation and condition.

People with mpox should be encouraged to seek help and support from their friends and families. This can include performing out-of-home tasks like shopping; but should also involve maintaining social and community connections during their isolation period through calls and texts, online spaces, social media, etc. If the person with mpox is experiencing mental or emotional distress, they should be directed to their healthcare provider or a crisis support service such as [Lifeline](#), [Blue Knot](#), [QLife](#) (LGBTIQ+ communities) or [13Yarn](#) (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities)

### *Additional resources*

- [UK Health Security Agency: Detailed advice on isolating at home with mpox](#) (NB: includes links to UK-specific resources)
- [NSW Health: Detailed mpox household cleaning and disinfection information](#)

### *References*

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