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cchealth.org

K-12 School Recommendations for Mpox

Contra Costa Health works closely with K-12 school partners to keep students, staff, and their families safe and healthy. Contra Costa Health will continue working with them to protect our community from mpox (initially called “monkeypox”).


Although there have been cases in Contra Costa and in California, mpox remains rare and the risk of exposure at school is low. However, schools should be aware of current guidance and prepare for the possibility of a case at school.

Mpox can cause flu-like symptoms (fever, headache, feeling more tired than usual, swollen lymph nodes (“glands”) and a **distinctive rash with sores that are usually painful**. A person with mpox infection is contagious when symptoms begin and until the sores are completely healed.

Anyone can get mpox but not everyone is at equal risk. Mpox spreads through close, personal, usually skin-to-skin contact. Spread through casual contact is less likely. Unlike COVID, the mpox virus does not spread through the air over long distances. During the 2022 outbreak, most cases were associated with sexual contact, particularly among men who recently had sex with multiple male partners. Schools may want to share prevention information with older students who are sexually active, including this [risk chart](#). More communication materials and educational information are available at cchealth.org/mpx or in our online [mpox communications toolkit](#).

Common practices already in place to prevent more common causes of illness will also help prevent mpox.

- **Contra Costa County School Districts and Schools**
 - **Routinely clean** commonly touched items using the appropriate products
 - **Report** communicable diseases, including mpox, among students and staff to the public health department
 - **Coordinate** with public health and take steps to protect others from illness
- **Contra Costa Health**
 - **Inform** districts and schools of current guidance and recommendations to

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- prevent others from becoming ill
 - **Vaccinate** to protect those at high-risk and prevent new mpox cases in our community
 - **Coordinate** with district/school when a mpox case has been identified at a school and others may have been exposed
 - **Parents, Students, and Staff:**
 - **Self-screen** for symptoms (fever, rash, etc.) daily and stay home when not feeling well.
 - **Report** illness to school and check with a doctor if symptoms are not getting better.
 - **Get vaccinated** for diseases that can cause fever, rash, and flu-like symptoms including: measles, chickenpox, flu, and COVID. Mpox vaccine is most helpful for community members at higher risk of exposure. People at higher risk of mpox exposure can speak with their healthcare provider about mpox vaccine or visit cchealth.org/immunization/clinics to schedule a vaccine appointment at one of our weekly public health immunization clinics.
 - **Practice prevention** by avoiding intimate and physical contact with anyone who has symptoms, talking openly with partners prior to intimate physical contact, covering exposed skin in dense indoor crowds, avoiding shared bedding and clothing, and knowing which countries have outbreaks when traveling.