

Guidance on the Protection and Prevention of MPOX in Homelessness Service Settings

Information Sheet

Date Updated: Dec 1, 2022

[MPOX](#) is a rare viral illness that causes fever, headache, swollen lymph nodes and tiredness, followed by a rash over a person's body. It is usually spread by very close contact with someone who has the virus.

Information on transmission, symptoms and diagnosis can be found on the City of Toronto's [MPOX webpage](#) or by calling Toronto Public Health's (TPH) Health Connections at 416-338-7600.

Prevention through Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC)

Continue to practice ongoing [Infection Prevention and Control \(IPAC\)](#) measures to help reduce the spread of MPOX and other communicable diseases. This includes continuing with enhanced cleaning protocols and use of personal protective equipment, such as gloves, gowns, protective eyewear and masks.

Identification of Symptoms

- Staff, clients and visitors should monitor themselves for [MPOX symptoms](#) before entering the premises.
- Shelter providers should post [symptom identification signage](#) at entrances.
- Anyone with symptoms should self-isolate and contact a health care provider.
- Shelter providers should also post [general prevention signage](#) throughout the site to encourage all persons to wear their masks, perform hand hygiene, and follow respiratory etiquette as per routine measures.

What to do if a Staff or Client may have MPOX

If you suspect MPOX in an individual at your site, contact the TPH Shelters Intake Line at 416-338-1521 or email TPHshelters@toronto.ca between the hours of 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. After-hours, please contact 311.

For Staff:

1. If you think you have MPOX, it is important to [isolate](#) right away, contact your direct supervisor and a health care provider. Do not come to work if you are exhibiting symptoms of MPOX.
2. You can get tested for MPOX at a healthcare provider's office, local walk-in clinic or [sexual health clinic](#). Call in advance to make sure that MPOX testing is available.

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Please do not go to an emergency department for testing unless you need emergency care.

3. People who have been in contact with a person who has MPOX should monitor themselves for symptoms for 21 days. You can continue with normal activities if you don't have symptoms. If symptoms develop, you should isolate and contact a healthcare provider.

For Clients:

If a client is suspected to have MPOX based on [symptoms](#):

Isolate client in-situ/implement on-site isolation.

- An individual with suspect or confirmed MPOX is to be placed in a single room with the door closed with a dedicated washroom, if possible.
- If a single room is not available, then precautions should be taken to minimize exposure to surrounding individuals such as having the client don a medical mask over their nose and mouth as tolerated and covering exposed skin lesions with clothing, sheets or a gown as best as possible.
- See [MPOX: Self-Isolation Guidance](#) on when to end self-isolation through a phased approach.

If **on-site isolation is not feasible**, individuals who meet [eligibility requirements](#) may be transferred to SSHA's Isolation and Recovery Site. Referrals can be made through [electronic referral](#) or by faxing a [hard copy referral](#) to (416) 696-3463.

For transportation support, contact the COVID-19 Isolation and Recovery Site to determine the best way to support the individual. The program can be reached by phone at (437) 343-1965 or by email at sshacovidreferral@toronto.ca

To determine isolation response refer to Table 1 below:

[Table 1: Isolation Response Plans by Setting](#)

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Setting	Status	Action
Congregate Settings	Test positive	Prioritized for referral to the Isolation and Recovery Site. In context of outbreak, will require in-situ plans in most cases; individuals may be referred after assessment based on complex support needs as part of in-situ planning.
Congregate Settings	Symptomatic close contact	May be referred after assessment, limited space reserved for individuals with complex support needs.
Congregate Settings	Asymptomatic close contact	Isolate in-situ.
Hotel/Single Room Occupancy Setting	Test positive	Isolate in-situ in most cases.
Hotel/Single Room Occupancy Setting	Symptomatic close contact	Isolate in-situ; individuals may be referred after assessment based on complex support needs.
Hotel/Single Room Occupancy Setting	Asymptomatic close contact	Isolate in-situ.
Living or Sleeping Outdoors (encampments)	Test positive	Prioritized for referral to the Isolation and Recovery Site.
Living or Sleeping Outdoors (encampments)	Symptomatic close contact	Prioritized for referral to the Isolation and Recovery Site.

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Setting	Status	Action
Living or Sleeping Outdoors (encampments)	Asymptomatic close contact	Referral to a shelter through Central Intake.

All staff providing direct care should wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), in accordance with the [Directive on mandatory IPAC measures for staff and clients](#), which remains in effect. Further information on the appropriate use of PPE can be found the [Use of Personal Protective Equipment in Homelessness Service Settings](#) information sheet.

Arrange client to get testing

Testing for MPOX is available through:

- [Sexual health clinics](#)
- On-site Inner City Health Associates (ICHA) primary care clinicians
- Primary care clinicians and/or community health centres, call in advance to make sure testing is available

It is not recommended to go to an emergency department for testing unless emergency care is required.

If testing is not available (e.g., sexual health clinic is closed because it is after hours), Toronto Public Health advises that testing can wait to be done the following day as long as the client is isolated and IPAC measures are in place.

All clients must be accepted back into the shelter site after testing, regardless of testing outcome. If the client is positive, they should be isolated in-situ or in accordance with Table 1: Isolation Response Plans by Setting.

Maintain all routine IPAC practices, refer to IPAC Manual (Section 5 – Environmental Cleaning)

- Handle all soiled laundry** in accordance with IPAC routine practices.

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- Staff are to protect themselves from potential cross-infection from soiled linen by wearing appropriate PPE (gloves, gown, fit-tested and seal-checked N95 respirator and eye protection) when handling soiled linens.
- Staff are to clean their hands upon removal of PPE.
- Care should be taken in the management of soiled laundry to avoid shaking or handling in a manner that may cause dispersal of microorganisms. Do not sort or pre-rinse soiled laundry in care areas.

b) **Maintain all environmental cleaning protocols**

- Healthcare-grade cleaning and disinfecting agents, with a Drug Identification Number (DIN) are appropriate for cleaning and disinfection of environmental surfaces and shared equipment in the patient care environment. Follow the manufacturer's recommendations for dilution and contact time.

c) **Food service items are to be managed in accordance with routine practices.**

- Dishware and eating utensils are effectively decontaminated in commercial dishwashers with hot water and detergents. Reusable dishware and utensils may be used; disposable dishes are not required.

Safe Handling of Pets

Clients who are pet owners who have a confirmed case of MPOX or under investigation should self-isolate with their pets (e.g., no one else walking the animal). Individuals with an MPOX infection can spread the virus to animals through close contact.

MPOX Vaccine

TPH continues to follow federal and provincial guidance on the administration of the MPOX vaccines to protect at-risk populations against the MPOX virus.

TPH and community partners are hosting MPOX vaccination clinics for at-risk populations. Only people who meet the [provincial criteria for vaccination to prevent MPOX infection](#) can book an appointment at a City-run clinic.

More information on MPOX vaccines, clinics and eligibility can be found on the [MPOX webpage](#).

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Resources

- City of Toronto [MPOX webpage](#) – for updates, fact sheets and signage
- City of Toronto [COVID-19 webpage](#) for Homelessness Services
- City of Toronto [MPOX: Self-Isolation Guidance](#)
- Public Health Ontario, [Infection Prevention and Control \(IPAC\) Recommendations for MPOX in Health Care Settings](#) (2nd revision, June 2022)
- City of Toronto [IPAC Manual for Shelter Settings](#)