



Home Care for Mpox (Monkeypox)

Most people recover from mpox (monkeypox) at home on their own. There are several things you can do at home to feel more comfortable while you recover. The strategies you use will depend on the symptoms you have, the level of pain you are in, and location of your sores or rash.

If these home care methods do not work well for you, talk to your healthcare provider about other options. They may be able to provide you with other medicine options and have more suggestions for managing your pain or rash.

If you are at higher risk for severe mpox, it is important to check your symptoms often and seek care if needed. This includes people who:

- Have HIV or other conditions that weaken their immune systems
- Are under the age of 8
- Are pregnant or breastfeeding
- Have a history of certain skin conditions. These include severe eczema or skin diseases that cause blistering.

Severe illness due to mpox may include:

- Fever
- Rapid increase in the number of sores
- Confusion
- Stiff neck
- Difficulty breathing
- Seizure
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting

Contact your provider right away if your illness gets worse or if your pain keeps you from eating, sitting, or going to the bathroom.

- **Keep sores clean and contact your healthcare provider if there are any signs of sores becoming infected by bacteria.** Such signs could include fever, increasing pain, redness, swelling, warmth, or drainage from sores or surrounding areas.

If you don't have a healthcare provider and need to see one, call 211 to learn about health care providers in your area. You can also reach out to your [local public health authority](#) or community clinic. They may be able to see you in one of their clinics or direct you to one that can. If it is an emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest hospital.

Reducing symptoms at home

There are several ways to manage your symptoms at home and keep your sores clean.

Keeping your sores clean can reduce risk of other infections. Cleaning may also prevent scarring!

Useful supplies:

- Water and healthy fluids: Drink lots of water and healthy fluids to stay hydrated, especially if you have diarrhea.
- Oatmeal: Warm oatmeal baths also reduce itching and pain.
- Non-stick gauze (i.e., Telfa gauze): Use gauze to cover sores and scabs. By doing so, you prevent other infections and help protect the people around you.
- Adhesive coverings (i.e., tegaderm, skin tape, or band-aids): Adhesive coverings secure gauze in place. This helps protect the skin, keep us from scratching, and helps minimize spread of mpox to others.

Helpful medicines:

Ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist to help you choose medicines that are right for you. Follow your provider or package instructions on the amount and timing of each dose, who should use the medicine and allergies.

Pain medications

Pain medicine can help reduce pain, swelling and fever. Some options include:

- Ibuprofen
- Acetaminophen
- Naproxen

Betadine (Povidone-iodine antiseptic (Antiseptic Medication (for cleaning wounds)

Betadine may reduce live mpox virus in or around sores. By decreasing the amount of virus, the chance of spreading the virus is lower. It does not eliminate the chance the virus will spread. Betadine also kills bacteria that can cause other infections.

Itch relief medicine

Several medicines that can help relieve itching are available options include:

- A&D ointment: This keeps the skin moist to promote healing and may help relieve itching.
- Oral antihistamines: These may provide temporary itch relief

- Skin creams and lotions: Some skin creams and lotions can also provide temporary itch relief. Be sure to choose effective lotions and creams such as calamine lotion, petroleum jelly, or cooling lotions (i.e. menthol and camphor lotions).
- Lidocaine gel: provides temporary pain relief when applied to painful sores.
 - *Ask your healthcare provider if lidocaine gel is right for you and use as directed.*

Rash and sore care:

1. Consider taking an anti-inflammatory pain medicine about 30 minutes before sore and rash care. This will minimize discomfort.
2. If possible, care for rashes and sores in private area away from others. [Disinfect](#) area after use. Consider designating one area in the home to use for care to reduce spread of the virus to household surfaces.
3. [Wash your hands](#) for 20 seconds with soap and water before touching bandages or open skin. If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
4. Swab each sore, area of rash and surrounding skin with Betadine. If you are allergic to Betadine you can use another non-painful/non-alcohol disinfectant.
5. Fold non-stick gauze in half.
6. Apply A&D or lidocaine ointment to the non-stick gauze.
7. Cover the sore with the gauze. Make sure the ointment side is down.
8. Secure the gauze with adhesive covering such as skin tape, band-aid, tegaderm.
9. Leave the dressing in place until one of the following occurs:
 - Pus, blood, or drainage is visible on the gauze
 - The gauze is leaking or lifting off
 - When fluid is visible under adhered border.
10. Discard any contaminated waste immediately away from pets or others in household.
11. Repeat hand hygiene (Step 3) after cleaning sores or changing bandages.
12. Repeat the process until all the spots have healed over with new, healthy skin.

Note: Sore/rash cleaning and bandage changes should be done by the person with mpox. If you need help from someone else, both of you should wear an N95 respirator, or a well-fitting mask. The person helping should also wear long-sleeves and disposable gloves. Clothes, linens, or towels that may have been contaminated should be laundered. Both should wash their hands after sore/rash care is complete.

If you have sores in or around your anus/rectum (butthole), or genitals:

- Painful sores can appear in and around the rectum.
- Soak the perineum (area between anus/rectum (butthole) and genitals) in warm water for about 10 minutes at a time. This can help with healing and pain relief.
 - Fill the bathtub or a basin with 3 inches of warm water.
 - Do not add soap, bubble bath or salts.
 - Soak the area for 10 minutes a few times per day.
- Lidocaine gel can be applied to the butt and anal tissue as a temporary pain reliever.
 - Applying a few minutes before bowel movements can help prevent pain.
- Avoid constipation by drinking plenty of water and by using stool softeners if needed.
- It is okay to use Betadine to clean skin around the butt and anal tissue.
- Tylenol and NSAIDs (Advil, Naproxen) can also help with pain.

If you have sores in your mouth:

- Sores in the mouth can be painful and cause difficulty eating and drinking.
- Gargle with baking soda or salt in warm water can ease pain and inflammation and keep sores clean. Mouthwash with no alcohol can help too, if tolerated.
- Numbing medicines, can help particularly painful areas, especially before eating or drinking. Examples include benzocaine or patches.
- Suck on ice chips or ice pops, and drink water to stay hydrated.

Watch your eyes:

- Mpox can infect the eyes and may cause vision loss.
- [Wash your hands](#) for 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol before touching or rubbing your eyes.
- Cover all areas of rash as above.
- If you wear contacts, switch to glasses until you're all better. This will help you avoid touching your eyes.
- If you have eye pain, a sore near your eyes, changes in vision or any other concerns about your eyes, call your healthcare provider right away.

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