

# Monkeypox Precautions in the Workplace

As the Centers for Disease Control has lessened restrictions for COVID-19, monkeypox has emerged as the newest public health emergency, but what does that mean for employers? Employers should be [educated](#) on monkeypox, like all communicable diseases, to provide a safe workplace. Here are some key things to know about the virus:

## Differences Between Monkeypox and COVID-19

- Monkeypox is not currently known as a threat to communities or workplaces.
- Vaccines already exist and medical experts are familiar with the virus. Therefore, it is not considered a “novel” virus. COVID-19 is considered a “novel” virus because it is the first of its kind with many unknowns about prevention, diagnosis, treatment, cures, and lasting effects.
- Monkeypox is not an airborne disease and is not spread as easily as COVID-19. It is only transferred by direct contact.

## Transmission

- The virus spreads with close, personal, or intimate contact, usually skin-to-skin contact.
- It can be transmitted by utensils shared and bedding or towels with monkeypox secretions.
- Transmission occurs within a two- to three-week period between when the rash appears and when it is scabbed over.

## Symptoms

- Typically monkeypox appears as a rash that looks like pimples and can be itchy or painful as well as blistering. There are several stages before the rash begins healing.
- [Symptoms](#) usually start within 3 weeks of exposure. The rash typically develops within one to four days after experiencing flu-like symptoms.
- Each person may experience different symptoms; some may experience only one and some may experience several.

## Prevention

- Good hand washing, hygiene, and social distancing protocols.
- Avoid close contact and intimacy with anyone experiencing symptoms or diagnosed with monkeypox.
- [Properly clean and disinfect](#) laundry and surfaces.
- Vaccination, when it does not compromise religious beliefs or medical advice.

## Employer Actions

- Employees reporting symptoms should [remain home](#) until the rash is completely gone.
- Employees reporting close contact with monkeypox should be sent for medical treatment immediately.
- Report cases to the local health department.
- Contact tracing is only necessary for situations where employees work near each other, are prone to skin-to-skin contact, or share clothing such as uniforms, safety equipment, etc.
- [Educate](#) employees about the virus and be cautious of conversations stigmatizing the virus or individuals infected with it.

Additional information about the monkeypox virus is provided by the [CDC](#), and the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#), or members may contact the 24/7 HR Hotline at 866-HR-Hotline (866)474.6854 or [InfoNow@mranet.org](mailto:InfoNow@mranet.org).