

What Pet Owners Should Know About Mpox

1. What is monkeypox?

Mpox is a contagious disease caused by the mpox virus. The mpox virus is in the same family of viruses as variola, the virus that causes smallpox. Mpox and smallpox symptoms are similar, but mpox symptoms are milder and rarely fatal. Visit the [Mpox Frequently Asked Questions](#) for more information.

2. How is mpox spread?

Mpox is spread by direct contact (close, personal, often skin-to-skin contact) with an infected person, animal or materials contaminated with the virus. Infected animals can spread mpox virus to people, and it is possible that people who are infected can spread mpox virus to animals through close contact, including petting, cuddling, hugging, kissing, licking, sharing sleeping areas, and sharing food. The risk is considered low for getting mpox by touching objects, fabrics, and surfaces that have been used by someone with mpox and not disinfected. For more information, visit the [Mpox Frequently Asked Questions](#).

3. Could my pet get mpox?

Animals that could be infected with mpox are rats, mice, and squirrels. It is unknown if dogs, cats, and guinea pigs can be infected with mpox. More information is in the CDC [Mpox in pets and other animals table](#).

4. What should I do with my pet if I have been exposed to mpox?

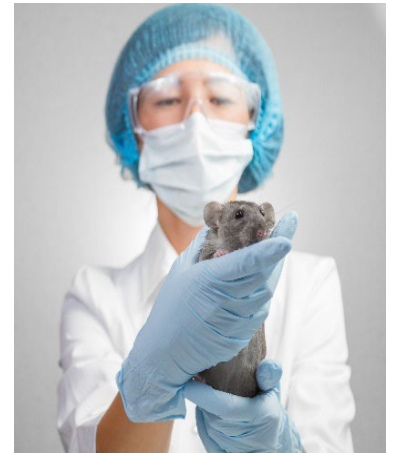
If you have been exposed or have mpox, you should avoid close contact with the exposed animal, and when possible, ask another household member to care for the animal until you are fully recovered. Close contact includes petting, cuddling, hugging, kissing, licking, sharing sleeping areas, and sharing food. After you have recovered, disinfect your home before bringing healthy animals back. More information is in the CDC [Pets in the Home](#).

5. What are the symptoms to look for in pets?

Symptoms of mpox vary between species. Symptoms may include lethargy, decreased appetite, fever, cough, nasal and/or eye secretions or crust, bloating, swelling in the front and hind limbs from enlarged lymph nodes, and a pimple or blister-like rash.

6. What should I do if my pet was exposed to mpox?

If your pet has potentially been exposed to mpox, but is not showing symptoms of the disease, they may need to be monitored for signs of illness. They should be kept at home and away from other animals and people for 21 days after the most recent contact.



Key Messages:

At this time, risk to the public and animals is low.

If your pet has been exposed to a person or animal that has mpox, contact Veterinary Public Health at 213-288-7060 or [vet@ph.lacounty.gov](mailto:veter@ph.lacounty.gov).

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7. What should I do if I think my pet has mpox?

The risk to animals is low at this time. However, if your pet has been exposed to a sick animal or person and is showing the symptoms of mpox, please follow these instructions:

DO:

- Contact Veterinary Public Health (213-288-7060; vet@ph.lacounty.gov).
- Separate the animal from people and other animals immediately (isolate in a separate room).
- Wash your hands using soap and water and/or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer after contact with the animal and any object that may be contaminated with virus.
- Clean and disinfect any surfaces or bedding after contact or use. Most household disinfectants (e.g. bleach) are effective against mpox. More information is in the CDC [Disinfecting Home and Other Non-Healthcare Settings](#).
- Contact your veterinarian to discuss your pet's symptoms if you feel your pet is ill and needs care.

DO NOT

- Do **not** take your pet to a veterinary hospital without first calling to discuss suspected mpox.
- Do **not** leave or euthanize your pet at an animal shelter.
- Do **not** release your pet into the wild. If it is infected, this could spread the disease to other animals and people. It is very important that this disease be contained.
- Do **not** put a mask on your pet
- Do **not** wipe or bathe your pet with chemical disinfectants such as alcohol, hydrogen peroxide, or other products, such as hand sanitizer, counter-cleaning wipes, or other industrial or surface cleaners.

Additional resources:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Monkeypox, General
<https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/index.html>