

Mpox (monkeypox) rash

DERMATOLOGISTS' TIPS FOR TREATING YOUR SKIN

People use different terms to describe the spots that can develop from mpox (formerly known as monkeypox), including rashes, bumps, lesions, and skin spots. These tips cover all these terms.

The mpox virus causes a rash. One or more rashes can appear anywhere on your body. However, during the current outbreak, many people have developed rashes on their genitals (penis, testicles, vulva, or vagina), anus, face, or mouth.¹⁻⁴

If you have mpox, it is important to take care of your skin while you have one or more skin spots. Here are some tips from dermatologists that can help your skin heal properly and minimize scarring:

While you have mpox rashes on your skin



Don't scratch the rash, skin spots, or scabs!

Take warm baths to help soothe your skin and keep your fingernails short to help prevent a skin infection caused by scratching.^{5,6}

If you have a rash on your genitals or around your anus, you can ease discomfort caused by taking sitz baths. One way to take a sitz bath is to sit in a clean bathtub of shallow, warm water. You can also buy a device called a sitz bath. Available online or at drug stores, this device is a shallow basin that you fill with warm water and place in your bathtub or over the rim of a toilet.

Applying cool compresses can also help soothe a rash on your genitals or around your anus. To make a cool compress, run a clean washcloth under cool tap water. Wring out the excess water. Then apply the damp washcloth to the itchy area. Leave the washcloth on your skin for a few minutes.



Wash your skin with a mild soap

– like one made for sensitive skin – and water.⁹

Don't share towels, washcloths, or other bath linens with people. Sharing unwashed towels, other bath linens, and clothing can spread mpox to others.



Help your skin heal by keeping the skin spots moist.

Dermatologists recommend applying petroleum jelly or a fragrance-free ointment that contains petrolatum. When applying the ointment, use a product that comes in a squeeze tube or bottle. You want to avoid dipping your fingers into a container, as that can transfer germs that may be in the container to your skin spots.



Keep all skin spots covered.

After applying ointment, place an adhesive bandage or non-stick gauze over the skin spots. Use paper tape or similar to keep the bandage in place. This helps prevent spreading the skin spots to other parts of your body and to other people. Once all scabs have fallen off and a fresh layer of skin has formed, you no longer need to cover the skin spots. Please refer to "After the mpox skin spots heal" on the next page.



Use an antiseptic or anti-bacterial medication only if your physician includes this in your treatment plan.

These medications are only needed if skin spots become infected.^{5,9-15}



Look for signs of infection,

which can include pus, redness on lighter skin tones and a purple, gray, or white color on darker skin tones, or the area feeling warm to the touch. If you think one or more of your skin spots have become infected, get immediate medical care.

For more information about mpox, visit the CDC site for mpox at: www.cdc.gov/mpox

If you have a rash or bump on your skin and you don't know what caused it, see a board-certified dermatologist.

Mpox (monkeypox) rash

DERMATOLOGISTS' TIPS FOR TREATING YOUR SKIN

After the mpox skin spots heal



If you are concerned about scars developing,

talk to your dermatologist about using a silicone-based gel or patch. This can help minimize scarring.^{10,16}



Protect your skin from the sun while until the skin spots heal.

This helps prevent discoloration from developing on your skin.¹⁰ After the skin spots have healed, to protect your skin from the sun, use a broad-spectrum sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher.



If you have scarring

and would like to discuss treatment options, we recommend you consult with a board-certified dermatologist. The American Academy of Dermatology Find A Dermatologist tool can be accessed here: <https://find-a-derm.aad.org/>

References

1. Monkeypox: Signs and Symptoms. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases (NCEZID), Division of High-Consequence Pathogens and Pathology (DHCPP). <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/symptoms.html>. Accessed August 22, 2022.
2. Bragazzi NL, Kong JD, Mahroum N, et al. Epidemiological trends and clinical features of the ongoing monkeypox epidemic: A preliminary pooled data analysis and literature review. *J Med Virol*. 2022.
3. Srivastava G, Srivastava G. Human Monkeypox Disease. *Clin Dermatol*. 2022.
4. Safer Sex, Social Gatherings, and Monkeypox. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Website. <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/sexualhealth/index.html>. Accessed August 23, 2022.
5. Reynolds MG, McCollum AM, Nguete B, Shongo Lushima R, Petersen BW. Improving the Care and Treatment of Monkeypox Patients in Low-Resource Settings: Applying Evidence from Contemporary Biomedical and Smallpox Biodefense Research. *Viruses*. 2017;9(12).
6. How to Care for a Child with Chickenpox. American Academy of Dermatology. <https://www.aad.org/public/everyday-care/itchy-skin/rash/chicken-pox>. Accessed August 22, 2022.
7. Genital Ulcers. Cleveland Clinic. <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/23320-genital-ulcers>. Accessed August 22, 2022.
8. Roett MA, Mayor MT, Uduhiri KA. Diagnosis and management of genital ulcers. *Am Fam Physician*. 2012;85(3):254-262.
9. Hunt SC, Azad S. ABCDEFGHI Systematic Approach to Wound Assessment and Management. *Adv Skin Wound Care*. 2022;35(7):366-374.

For more information about mpox, visit the CDC site for mpox at: www.cdc.gov/mpox

If you have a rash or bump on your skin and you don't know what caused it, see a board-certified dermatologist.

