



Public Health
England

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Monkeypox: Guidance for environmental cleaning and decontamination

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Further information is also available on the PHE monkeypox webpage
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/monkeypox>



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This document outlines guidance for the measures to take to clean and decontaminate healthcare settings that have been potentially contaminated by a confirmed case of monkeypox.

Background

Monkeypox is a rare disease that is caused by infection with monkeypox virus and does not spread easily between people. Spread of monkeypox may occur when a person comes into close contact with an animal, human, or materials contaminated with the virus. The virus enters the body through broken skin (even if not visible), the respiratory tract, or the mucous membranes (eyes, nose, or mouth). Person-to-person spread is very uncommon, but may occur through:

- contact with clothing or linens (such as bedding or towels) used by an infected person
- direct contact with monkeypox skin lesions or scabs
- large droplet respiratory spread from prolonged close contact with an individual with a monkeypox rash

The environmental risk is greatest from clothing and linens used by an infected person, for example in bedrooms and bathrooms.

Decontamination of a room

Individuals cleaning or decontaminating rooms that a patient with monkeypox has spent significant time in should wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) to avoid direct contact with contaminated material during the process.

The PPE required is:

- a disposable gown
- disposable gloves
- disposable shoe covers
- respiratory protection (FFP3 respirator)
- eye protection

Contaminated clothing and linens should be collected and bagged before the room is cleaned. These clothing or linen items should not be shaken or handled in a manner that may disperse infectious particles. Items of potentially infected clothing or linen should be placed in a water soluble (alginate) bag, sealed or tied and placed inside an impermeable bag for transport to the laundry facility.

After contaminated clothing and linens have been removed, the rooms can be cleaned and disinfected as per standard terminal cleaning of an isolation room. The monkeypox virus will be destroyed through the use of hospital detergents followed by disinfection with 0.1% sodium hypochlorite (1000ppm available chlorine). Pay particular attention to frequently touched surfaces such as tables, door handles, toilet flush handles and taps. Carpets and soft furnishings should be steam cleaned, where possible.

PPE worn when removing clothing and linens should be disposed of in a secure bag for incineration as per routine medical waste procedures.

Cleaning of common areas

For those rooms where the case may have spent limited time, appropriate PPE for cleaning includes a face mask, disposable gloves and apron.

Cleaning should include the use of hospital detergents followed by disinfection with 0.1% sodium hypochlorite (1000ppm available chlorine). Pay particular attention to frequently touched surfaces such as tables, door handles, toilet flush handles and taps. Carpets and soft furnishings should be steam cleaned, where possible.

All PPE and disposable materials should be discarded into a dedicated waste bag after cleaning and decontamination for incineration as per routine medical waste procedures

Laundry

After removing clothing and linens from the rooms as described above, they may be washed in a standard washing machine with warm water (over 60⁰ C) and detergent; bleach may also be added but is not necessary.

Domestic settings

If cleaning is required in a domestic setting, such as a home, individuals should be made aware that they should not attempt to clean or decontaminate the area themselves. The local HPT should be contacted and in liaison with the local authority, they will advise on decontamination of the affected areas and disposal of any waste.

More information about monkeypox:

PHE webpage: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/monkeypox>