

# Experts offer guidance for health care workers caring for patients with suspected monkeypox amid COVID-19 pandemic

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A commentary published in *Annals of Internal Medicine* offers guidance to health care workers in contact with patients who have contracted

monkeypox. The authors write that although monkeypox is unlikely to reach the pandemic spread of COVID-19, physicians and other health care workers must be vigilant, with a high index of suspicion and careful adherence to appropriate infection control precautions as the outbreak unfolds.

Monkeypox is a virus that belongs to the Orthopoxvirus genus of the Poxviridae family, which also includes the smallpox and cowpox viruses. The authors advise that healthcare workers should follow Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines to protect themselves and safely manage a case of monkeypox. The guidelines include recommendations to wear [personal protective equipment](#) (PPE), use approved disinfectants, not engage in procedures that aerosolize the [virus](#), and engage in careful contact tracing to prevent further spread.

The authors advise that careful management of monkeypox cases as [health care workers](#) encounter them will prevent monkeypox from adding to ongoing staffing shortages. They stress that because COVID-19 has already depleted public health resources and public desire to engage in risk mitigation, public health workers and health care workers are exhausted. They add that the prospect of addressing a new communicable pathogen may add to their existing stress and add that this should be acknowledged and mitigated whenever possible.

The authors also caution the infection control response must avoid stigmatizing the most affected patient population and should instead ally itself with the community of gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men (MSM) to combat monkeypox.

**More information:** Tara N. Palmore et al, Adding New Fuel to the Fire: Monkeypox in the Time of COVID-19—Implications for Health Care Personnel, *Annals of Internal Medicine* (2022). [DOI: 10.7326/M22-1763](#). [www.acpjournals.org/doi/10.7326/M22-1763](http://www.acpjournals.org/doi/10.7326/M22-1763)

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