



## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Larry Hogan, Governor · Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor · Dennis R. Schrader, Secretary

### Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners

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## MSBDE

### COVID-19 and Monkeypox: Update September, 2022

#### COVID-19:

COVID-19 remains a highly transmissible infectious disease. Recently, its variants, especially the BA.5 variant, have contributed to a significant increase in the positivity rate in Maryland. Recently the COVID positivity rate in the State has hovered between 10 and 12 % with > 1,500 new cases per day. While many COVID restrictions have been lifted in community settings such as grocery stores, schools, malls, etc, to date, guidance for enhanced respiratory protection remains in place for health care facilities, including private dental offices. Specifically, the CDC guidelines for health care settings set forth the wearing of facemasks for each person entering the setting.

The Omicron specific vaccine booster was approved by the CDC on September 1st and the CDC recommends the updated COVID-19 boosters from Pfizer-BioNTech for people ages 12 years and older and from Moderna for people ages 18 years and older. This booster adds Omicron BA.4 and BA.5 spike protein components to the current vaccine composition, helping to restore protection that has waned since previous vaccination by targeting emerging variants. Dental practitioners should get boosted as soon as the shots become available.

With the CDC periodically updating its COVID-related infection control guidelines, including the use of masks in health care facilities such as private dental offices, it is essential for licensees to keep abreast of those guidelines in order to protect the public, their colleagues, and themselves. It is every licensee's responsibility to follow all applicable CDC guidelines. See Md. Code Ann., Health Occ. § 4-315(a)(30) and § 4-315(b)(18). The most recent CDC Guidance for Healthcare Personnel may be accessed via the below link:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-recommendations.html>

### Monkeypox:

Monkeypox is an emerging disease that has been declared a U.S. public health emergency by the White House on August 8, 2022, and the number of cases are increasing at an alarming rate. On September 2, 2022, there were 534 confirmed cases in Maryland with the most cases in Baltimore City and the counties surrounding DC.

Total Positive Cases		
534		
Anne Arundel County	33	6.2%
Baltimore County	43	8.1%
Baltimore City	161	30.1%
Montgomery County	62	11.6%
Prince George's County	196	36.7%

This viral infection typically presents with a painful rash consisting of deep-seated and well-circumscribed lesions, often with central umbilication; and the lesions progress through specific sequential stages of macules, papules, vesicles, pustules, and scabs. These lesions can sometimes be confused with other diseases that are more commonly encountered in clinical practice (e.g., secondary syphilis, herpes, and varicella zoster). Fever, headache and enlarged nodes in the mandibular, cervical, or inguinal region are commonly seen. Monkeypox is generally transmitted by skin-to-skin contact or direct contact with the lesions. Transmission by fomites such as bedding towels, clothing, etc. has also been reported. Droplet transmission to those who have close contact, such as in a dental visit are also possible. The CDC recommends enhanced respiratory protection and facial protection whenever treating an active or suspected patient with Monkeypox. As there are many unknowns about this infection and screening/testing is just beginning, strict adherence to Standard Precautions that includes contact, droplet and airborne precautions is recommended.

The CDC recommends home isolation for individuals infected with monkeypox, however, should your office come into contact with a patient suspected to have monkeypox, the CDC offers additional guidance regarding isolation precautions and handling of waste: [https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/clinicians/infection-control/healthcare.html#anchor\\_1653508926176](https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/clinicians/infection-control/healthcare.html#anchor_1653508926176)

**Please be advised that Monkeypox is a reportable disease!** Dental practitioners must report suspected cases to the MDH ASAP.



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More information on Monkeypox is available at  
<https://health.maryland.gov/phpa/OIDEOR/Pages/monkeypox.aspx>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Attachment 1: The most recent Monkeypox clinician letter from the Maryland Department of Health dated August 5, 2022, may be found on the MSBDE Website.

Note: The MSBDE is not the agency that promulgates regulations on respiratory protection. The MSBDE recommends that our licensees stay current on the ever-changing CDC recommendations.