

**Virginia Peninsula Community College**  
**Infectious - Contagious Illness/Disease Awareness**

**Monkeypox:** Virginia, the Hampton Roads Region and areas within the Hampton-Peninsula Health Districts are experiencing an increase in cases of Monkeypox and more cases are expected. Monkeypox spreads from person to person through direct contact with sores, scabs, or body fluids; contact with contaminated items, like linens; and respiratory droplets during prolonged face-to-face contact. Monkeypox can spread during intimate contact, including sex. Anyone can get and spread monkeypox. Most cases are in men who self-identify as gay, bisexual, or other men who have sex with men (MSM). MSM with multiple sex partners are currently at greatest risk.

- People with monkeypox are contagious from when symptoms start until all sores have healed and a fresh layer of skin has formed. This can take 2–4 weeks.
- People with monkeypox should stay home (isolate) unless they need medical care or have an emergency, ideally, until they are no longer infectious.
- If unable to isolate for the entire duration of illness or when separating from others is not possible, people with monkeypox should wear a well-fitting face mask, cover areas where rash or sores are present, and wash their hands.
- When a case is identified, the local health department conducts an investigation and does contact tracing to identify, assess, and monitor close contacts.
- Close contacts should monitor their health for a period of 21 days, post exposure to the monkeypox virus, but do not need to stay home (quarantine).
- There are no specific treatments approved by the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) for monkeypox, but antivirals might help those at risk of severe illness.
- Vaccines for monkeypox are available to individuals who meet eligibility criteria. To register for a vaccine clinic please visit [vase.vdh.virginia.gov](http://vase.vdh.virginia.gov) . If you have been exposed to monkeypox contact your local health department to determine vaccine eligibility.

The stigma associated with Monkeypox and those who may test positive can be harmful. It can create lost opportunities to detect and address infections in other populations and provide a false sense of security.

Anyone experiencing signs and/or symptoms of Monkeypox (fever, headache, body aches, fatigue, swollen lymph nodes, and rash) is strongly encouraged to immediately seek care and/or advisement from a medical professional or contact their local health department.

The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) maintains the Monkeypox information website at [www.vdh.virginia.gov/monkeypox](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/monkeypox) and a dashboard of Monkeypox cases reported to the VDH at [www.vdh.virginia.gov/monkeypox/data-in-virginia](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/monkeypox/data-in-virginia).

**COVID-19:** Anyone can be affected by COVID-19 and symptoms may range from someone being asymptomatic (no symptoms) to mild, moderate, and/or severe. Research has revealed that certain things can make people more likely to get very sick with COVID-19, as well as that certain settings and activities can make you more likely to get infected with the virus that causes COVID-19. Symptoms of COVID-19 may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. Symptoms may include, but are not limited to:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

The VDH and CDC recommends that the best way to mitigate against hospitalization and potential severe COVID-19 symptoms is to get vaccinated and boosted. Individuals are encouraged to contact their medical practitioner or the local health department to discuss their specific medical history, disease/illness risks, and mitigation options that are most appropriate for them as an individual.

Additional information regarding COVID-19 may be reviewed on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website at [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html) or by visiting the VDH website at <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus>. The VDH also maintains a dashboard of COVID-19 cases reported to the VDH at [www.vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus/see-the-numbers/covid-19-in-virginia](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus/see-the-numbers/covid-19-in-virginia).

### **Influenza (Flu):**

Influenza, better known as the “Flu” is typically a contagious respiratory illness (better known as seasonal flu) that is caused by viruses that infect the nose, throat, and lungs. There are two main types of influenza viruses, Type A and Type B, each including multiple strains of the virus that tend to change from year to year.

The flu typically spreads via person to person by droplets from the nose or throat that are released when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

The VDH and CDC recommends that the best way to mitigate against, attempt to prevent, and/or attempt to reduce the symptoms and hospitalization caused by the flu is to get vaccinated each year. Individuals are encouraged to contact their medical practitioner or the local health department to discuss their specific medical history, disease/illness risks, and mitigation options that are most appropriate for them as an individual.

The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) maintains an Influenza (Flu) information website at [www.vdh.virginia.gov/epidemiology/influenza-flu-in-virginia](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/epidemiology/influenza-flu-in-virginia) and a dashboard of Flu cases reported to the VDH at [www.vdh.virginia.gov/monkeypox/data-in-virginia](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/monkeypox/data-in-virginia). (Influenza Surveillance) at [www.vdh.virginia.gov/epidemiology/influenza-flu-in-virginia/influenza-surveillance](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/epidemiology/influenza-flu-in-virginia/influenza-surveillance).

**Other Potential Infectious/Contagious Illnesses/Diseases:** While Monkeypox, COVID-19, and Influenza are referenced above, they are not the only infectious/contagious diseases and/or illnesses that one may contract and/or inadvertently spread to others. They are currently three of the more prevalent in our area; however, everyone is reminded and encouraged to employ socially responsible behaviors when they are feeling ill, or have a confirmed illness that may be infectious and/or contagious to others, and not come present in person for work and/or class activities. Faculty and staff should notify their supervisor, and students should notify their course instructional faculty. Those persons experiencing an infectious and/or contagious disease/illness should follow the guidance of a medical professional, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and/or the Virginia Department of Health (VDH), and should not present for work and/or class until they are determined to no longer be infectious and/or contagious.

Additional information regarding the College's policies, guidelines, and/or expectations related to contagious/infectious diseases can be found in the student handbook for students and in the Administrative Policy Manual (APM) for employees.

**Reminders:** Faculty and supervisors are strongly encouraged to work with their students and/or employees to develop processes for those diagnosed with an infectious and/or contagious disease to ensure the continuity of educational opportunities, as well as the continuity of business operations, as appropriate and necessary. As indicated in the information above, recovery, isolation, and/or quarantine time frames may be as short as a couple of days to a month or greater. Each instance will require a case-by-case approach, students will need to collaborate with their course(s) faculty/instructor and employees will need to collaborate with their supervisor(s) and human resources.

It is important to remember that not all courses and/or educational programs have the ability, allow for, and/or support a transition of the educational opportunity to an alternate modality/offering; nor does each employment position at the college have the ability, allow for, and/or support a transition to an alternate work format. All instances will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and the appropriate options will be presented to students and/or employees as appropriate and necessary to support the decision-making process.

Virginia Peninsula Community College has a contagious/infectious disease policy for students, as well as faculty and staff.

For additional information regarding campus and personal emergency preparedness, health and safety, visit [www.vpcc.edu/emergency-preparedness](http://www.vpcc.edu/emergency-preparedness) or scan the QR for direct access to the information.



Sources: Virginia Department of Health and the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.