



# MONKEYPOX

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## ► **Monkey-pox: Basic Information**

Monkey-pox is a rare but potentially serious disease that is caused by the monkey-pox virus. Monkey-pox virus is from the same family of viruses as the smallpox virus. It is also less severe and transmissible than smallpox. Monkey-pox can spread from infected humans, animals, and materials contaminated with the virus. Monkey-pox virus is characterized by a new, unexplained rash and skin lesions. It is usually found in Central and West Africa and normally does not spread in the United States.

However, since May 2022, there has been an outbreak of monkey-pox in several countries where the virus is not usually found, including in the United States. While anyone can develop and spread monkey-pox after being exposed to the virus, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that most cases of monkey-pox in the U.S. have occurred among gay, bisexual, trans, and other men who have sex with men (MSM). The overall risk to the public remains low.

## ► **Transmission**

Monkey-pox does not spread easily from person to person. People must have close, sustained contact with an infected person to get the virus. People usually become infected with monkey-pox:

- By having direct contact with the skin lesions or body fluids of an infected person;
- Through sharing items, such as bedding or clothing of an infected person; or
- Through prolonged exposure to an infected person's respiratory secretions.

Monkey-pox can also be spread to people from animals through bites, scratches, preparation of meat or use of a product from an infected animal.

## ► **Symptoms**

Monkey-pox is typically characterized by a new, unexplained rash that develops into hard, round, fluid or pus-filled skin lesions. Other early symptoms include:

- Fever
- Swollen lymph nodes
- Muscle aches
- Chills

The monkey-pox rash usually develops within one to three days after fever. However, some people may experience a rash or sores first, followed by other symptoms. Some people may also only develop a rash.

## ► Treatment

Most people who have monkey-pox recover without needing treatment within two to four weeks. While there is no specific treatment for monkey-pox, antiviral medications that have been used to treat smallpox can be used. People who have been exposed to someone with monkey-pox may be eligible to receive a vaccine to prevent the onset of disease or reduce the severity of symptoms.

## ► Prevention tips

- If you were exposed to monkey-pox, monitor for symptoms for 21 days after your date of last exposure. It is important to check your temperature two times per day during your monitoring period. If symptoms begin, contact a doctor immediately and isolate away from others.
- You can continue daily activities, like going to work or school, if you do not develop any symptoms. If your partner has monkey-pox, avoid sex or being intimate until all sores have healed and a fresh layer of skin has formed. Do not handle or touch the bedding, towels, or clothing of a person with monkey-pox. Standard household cleaning products and disinfectants should be used to wash any surfaces and materials that have been touched by someone who has monkey-pox, followed by handwashing.
- Since monkey-pox is most often spread from person to person, contact tracing is also an important tool that can be used to help limit the spread of disease.

## Reference

World Health Organisation (WHO)