



What is monkeypox?

Monkeypox is an illness caused by infection with the monkeypox virus that can infect humans and animals. In May 2022, public health officials began tracking a global outbreak of monkeypox that has spread across several countries that don't normally report monkeypox. Cases currently appear to be spreading within sexual and social networks and have been observed among men who have sex with men. However, monkeypox is not a gay disease and anyone can get or pass along monkeypox. BPHC wants to reiterate that stigmatizing people because of a disease is never acceptable and that we need to advocate against stigma and discrimination.

How is monkeypox spread?

Anyone can get or spread monkeypox. Monkeypox is most commonly spread through close and sustained intimate contact, including:

- Direct "skin to skin" or "skin to mouth" contact with monkeypox rash, sores, or scabs:
 - Sexual contact
 - Touching, hugging, massaging, kissing
- Prolonged face to face contact with respiratory droplets from a person with monkeypox
- Pregnant people can spread the virus to their fetus through the placenta
- Animal to human transmission is also possible, ex. by being scratched or bitten by the animal or by preparing or eating meat or using products from an infected animal.

A person with monkeypox is infectious from the beginning of symptoms. They can stay that way until sores have crusted, scabbed over, fallen off, and a fresh layer of healthy skin has formed underneath. This can often take several weeks.

What are the symptoms of monkeypox?

The most common symptom of monkeypox infection is a rash that looks like raised bumps, pimples, or fluid-filled sores. They can appear anywhere on the face, arms, feet, and body, including the genitals or anus, and can be confused with syphilis, herpes, and other sexually transmitted infections.

People can also develop the following "flu-like" symptoms 1-3 days before or with rash onset:

- Fever
- Headache
- Muscle aches
- Backache
- Swollen lymph nodes
- General feeling of discomfort and exhaustion

Is there treatment for monkeypox?

There are ways to improve the symptoms of monkeypox, including through antiviral treatment (“TPOXX” or tecovirimat) and supportive care. You may be eligible for antiviral treatment, tecovirimat or TPOXX, if you have or are at high risk of severe disease, including if you have an immunocompromising condition, if you have monkeypox lesions in the mucus membranes, including **eyes, mouth, genitals, or anus**, if you are pregnant or breastfeeding, in pediatric patients, or if you experience other complications from MPV infection, such as secondary skin infections, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea, or dehydration. For additional information, please contact your healthcare provider and/or visit the [CDC website](#).

Can I get a vaccine for monkeypox?

The FDA-licensed JYNNEOS vaccination is available to individuals who live or work in Massachusetts and are most at risk of exposure to an individual with monkeypox. This includes people who are:

- Known contacts of people diagnosed with monkeypox such as sexual partners, household contacts, and healthcare workers); as well as
- Presumed contacts who:
 - Know that a sexual partner in the past 14 days was diagnosed with monkeypox
 - Had multiple sexual partners in the past 14 days in a jurisdiction with known monkeypox

The JYNNEOS vaccine requires two doses, 28 days apart. A person is considered fully vaccinated two weeks after their second dose. For a list of providers offering vaccine appointments, visit mass.gov/monkeypoxvaccine.

What can I do to protect myself from getting infected with monkeypox?

- Getting vaccinated against monkeypox can protect you from getting sick if you are exposed to monkeypox.
- Avoid physical and sexual contact with anyone who has a new rash or sores or who feels ill.
- Talk to your partners about getting vaccinated against monkeypox and check in with each other about new or unexplained sores or rashes on your bodies, as well as recent illnesses.
- Avoid touching or kissing any rashes or sores.
- Avoid sharing items such as towels, clothing, linens, or sex toys with others, especially if they feel ill. Wash these items regularly.
- Wash your hands regularly.
- Minimize skin-to-skin contact when attending large events or parties.

What should I do if I feel sick, have a new rash, or think I may have a monkeypox infection:

- Stay home and away from others and contact a healthcare provider immediately. Don't delay, there are testing and treatment options for monkeypox.
- Avoid gatherings, sex, and close contact with others until a healthcare provider examines you.
- Think about your close or sexual contacts within the last 21 days. You might be asked to share this information to help stop the spread.
- When you visit a healthcare provider or if you need to be around others, cover your rash or sores and wear a mask if possible.