

What You Need to Know About Monkeypox

Monkeypox is a rare disease caused by the monkeypox virus, which belongs to the same virus family as the variola virus (smallpox). Monkeypox symptoms are similar to smallpox but milder. Monkeypox is rarely fatal, and it is not related to chickenpox.

1 Where did monkeypox come from?

Monkeypox was discovered in 1958 when two outbreaks of a pox-like disease occurred in monkey colonies kept for research. Despite being named “monkeypox,” the source of the disease is unknown. However, African rodents and non-human primates (like monkeys) might harbor the virus and infect people.

The first human case of monkeypox was recorded in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 1970. Before the 2022 outbreak, monkeypox had been reported in several central and western African countries. Previously, almost all monkeypox cases in people outside of Africa were linked to imported animals or to international travel to countries where the disease commonly occurs.

2 How does monkeypox spread?

Monkeypox spreads primarily through direct contact with infectious sores, scabs, or body fluids, including during sex, as well as activities like kissing, hugging, massaging, and cuddling. Monkeypox can spread through touching items used by a person with monkeypox that haven't been cleaned, such as clothing and bedding. It can also spread by respiratory secretions during prolonged, close, face-to-face contact.

People with monkeypox are contagious from the time symptoms start until the rash has fully healed and a fresh layer of skin has formed. Monkeypox illnesses typically last 2-4 weeks. People who do not have symptoms cannot spread the virus to others.

Monkeypox is **NOT** spread through:

- Casual, brief conversations
- Walking by someone with monkeypox, like in a grocery store.

3 What are the symptoms of monkeypox?

Symptoms of monkeypox include: fever, headache, muscle aches, backache, swollen lymph nodes in your throat or groin, chills and exhaustion, and a rash can develop, often beginning on the face, which then spreads to other parts of the body, including the genitals.

If you have a new or unexplained rash or other symptoms, seek medical care for testing and evaluation. Avoid crowds and close contact with others, including sexual or intimate contact, until seeing your healthcare provider.

4 Who is most at-risk for monkeypox infection?

Anyone can get monkeypox. However, the risk of monkeypox in the United States is considered low, as monkeypox does not spread easily between people. Anyone in close contact with a person with monkeypox can get it and should take steps to protect themselves. People who do not have monkeypox symptoms cannot spread the virus to others.

In the current outbreak, the vast majority of transmission and cases have been among men who have sex with men. However, this does not mean monkeypox only occurs in this population.

5 Is there a monkeypox vaccine?

Yes. Two vaccines licensed by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) are available for preventing monkeypox infection – JYNNEOS (also known as Imvamune or Imvanex) and ACAM2000. In the U.S., there is currently a limited supply of JYNNEOS, although more doses are expected soon.



There is an ample supply of ACAM2000. However, this vaccine shouldn't be used in people who have some health conditions, including a weakened immune system, skin conditions like atopic dermatitis/eczema, or pregnancy. No data is currently available yet on the effectiveness of these vaccines in the current outbreak.

At this time, the CDC does not recommend widespread vaccination against monkeypox. However, vaccination may be recommended for close personal contacts of people with monkeypox, and those who have been exposed to the virus. If you have questions regarding monkeypox and the monkeypox vaccine, contact your healthcare provider.

6 Has monkeypox been found in North Dakota?

Yes. The first case of monkeypox was identified by the North Dakota Department of Health on July 20, 2022. The individual likely acquired monkeypox while traveling out-of-state. To read more about this case, visit the NDDoH website: <https://www.health.nd.gov/news/north-dakota-department-health-identifies-monkeypox-case>

7 Where can I get more information on monkeypox?

- CDC Website: <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/about.html>
- CDC Situation Summary: <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/response/2022/index.html>
- NDDoH Website: <https://www.health.nd.gov/monkeypox>
- Knowtify by ND Health: <https://knowtify.health.nd.gov/need-to-know-monkeypox/>