



HEALTH ALERT

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Monkeypox Virus Facts

On August 4, 2022, the Biden administration declared monkeypox a public health emergency due to rising cases across the United States. The Office of Developmental Programs created this Health Alert based on information available from the PA Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to help create awareness about monkeypox.

What is monkeypox?

Monkeypox is a disease caused by infection with the monkeypox virus. Monkeypox rarely causes death. The first human case of monkeypox was recorded in Africa in 1970. Prior to the 2022 outbreak, almost all monkeypox cases in people outside of Africa were linked to international travel to countries where the disease commonly occurs or through imported animals. Despite being named “monkeypox,” the source of the disease remains unknown. However, African rodents and non-human primates (like monkeys) might harbor the virus and infect people.

What are the symptoms of monkeypox?

Symptoms of monkeypox can include:

- Fever
- Headache
- Muscle aches and backache
- Swollen lymph nodes
- Chills



- Exhaustion
- Respiratory symptoms
 - sore throat, nasal congestion, or cough
- A rash that can look like pimples or blisters
 - The rash may appear on the face, inside the mouth, and on other parts of the body, like the hands, feet, chest, genitals (penis, testicles, labia, and vagina), or anus (butthole).
 - The rash goes through different stages before healing completely.
 - Sometimes, people get a rash first, followed by other symptoms. Others only experience a rash.



The time from exposure to when symptoms appear (this is called the incubation period) for monkeypox is about 12 days with a range from 7 to 17 days.

How long does monkeypox last?

Monkeypox can spread from the time symptoms start until the rash has fully healed and a fresh layer of skin has formed. The illness typically lasts 2-4 weeks.

Is monkeypox deadly?

Monkeypox rarely causes death. To date, there have been no deaths reported in the United States due to the monkeypox virus.

How do people get monkeypox?

Monkeypox spreads in a few ways.

- Monkeypox can spread to anyone through close, personal, often skin-to-skin contact, including:
 - Direct contact with monkeypox rash, scabs, or body fluids from a person with monkeypox.
 - Touching objects, fabrics (clothing, bedding, or towels), and surfaces that have been used by someone with monkeypox.
 - Contact with respiratory secretions.
- This direct contact can happen during intimate contact, including:
 - Oral, anal, and vaginal sex or touching the genitals or anus of a person with monkeypox.
 - Hugging, massage, and kissing.
 - Prolonged face-to-face contact.
 - Touching fabrics and objects during sex that were used by a person with monkeypox and that have not been disinfected, such as bedding, towels, fetish gear, and sex toys.
- A pregnant person can spread the virus to their fetus through the placenta.

It's also possible for people to get monkeypox from infected animals, either 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 can spread it to others from the time symptoms start until the rash has fully healed and a fresh layer of skin has formed. The illness typically lasts 2-4 weeks.

Who is at greatest risk of getting monkeypox?

People with monkeypox in the current outbreak generally report having close, sustained physical contact with other people who have monkeypox. While many of those affected in the current global outbreaks are gay, bisexual, or other men who have sex with men, anyone who has been in close contact with someone who has monkeypox can get the illness.

How do I get tested for monkeypox?

If you have any symptoms of monkeypox or have had close contact with someone who has monkeypox, talk to your healthcare provider. They may recommend that you have a test.

Is there a treatment for monkeypox?

Most people who develop monkeypox have mild illness and require no treatment. Primarily the treatment, when needed, is supportive but there is an antiviral, called Tecovirimat, that treats Monkeypox.

Is there a vaccine for monkeypox?

There are 2 vaccines against monkeypox: ACAM2000 and JYNNEOS. These vaccines are used to prevent monkeypox infection and can be used for post-exposure vaccination. Post-exposure vaccination means that persons can be vaccinated up to 14 days after a known exposure to prevent infection.

How is vaccine currently being used?

Vaccine doses are being used for individuals who may be at risk of acquiring monkeypox or those who might have severe outcomes if they become infected.

People who may be eligible for vaccination include:

- People who have been identified by public health officials as a contact of someone with monkeypox
- People who may have been exposed to monkeypox, such as:
 - People who are aware that one of their sexual partners in the past 2 weeks has been diagnosed with monkeypox
 - People who had multiple sexual partners in the past 2 weeks in an area with known monkeypox cases

Additional groups, including pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) will be added as additional vaccine resources are made available.

If I am eligible for monkeypox vaccine, how do I get it?

Individuals who think they meet the vaccine eligibility criteria can contact 1-877- PA-HEALTH or their local health department to determine if they are eligible and where they can go to receive a dose.

What action should I take if I have been exposed to monkeypox?

If you have been in contact with someone who has monkeypox, contact your healthcare provider. You should monitor your health and check your temperature twice daily. If symptoms develop, you should immediately self-isolate and contact your healthcare provider or the health department for further guidance.

If you are a contact and remain asymptomatic, you can continue to do your routine daily activities (e.g., go to work, school). Contacts should not donate blood, cells, tissue, breast milk, semen, or organs while they are under symptom surveillance.

For more information about monkeypox:

[Monkeypox.pdf \(pa.gov\)](#)

<https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/>

<https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/faq.html>

This Health Alert provides general information. Please contact your healthcare practitioner and/or veterinarian for specific clinical information related to you or your animal.

Attachments:

Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) Health Alert

Monkeypox Department of Health (DOH) FAQ