

Monkeypox

FACT SHEET



Washtenaw County
Health Department

What is monkeypox?

Monkeypox is a viral disease that can be spread between animals and humans. It is present in Central and West Africa, and cases linked to international travel or imported animals have occurred in people in other areas. Monkeypox cases in the U.S. are rare. The main carrier of monkeypox remains unknown; however, African rodents and non-human primates (like monkeys) may hold the virus and infect people.

What are the symptoms?

- Rash with blisters on face, hands, feet, eyes, mouth and/or genitals
- Fever
- Headache
- Muscle aches, backache
- Swollen lymph nodes
- Chills
- Exhaustion

Symptoms usually appear in 5 to 14 days after exposure to the virus, but may take up to 21 days. The rash often starts 1-3 days after fever but may occur without fever or other symptoms. Lesions (sores) progress through several stages before falling off. Rash may begin on the face and spread. Rashes have also occurred in the genital and anal areas without affecting other parts of the body. Illness typically lasts 2-4 weeks. A person is considered contagious when symptoms begin and until sores have crusted and fallen off.

How is it spread?

Monkeypox is spread through close contact with an infected person or animal, or with material contaminated with the virus. It can be spread from person to person by close contact with lesions (sores), body fluids, respiratory droplets, and contaminated objects, such as bedding or clothing. Direct skin-to-skin or prolonged face-to-face contact with an infected person or object is typically required for spread to occur.

How is it treated?

There is no specific treatment for monkeypox, although antiviral medications may be used. In some cases, a vaccine may be able to prevent infection after exposure.

The type of monkeypox seen in this 2022 outbreak is very rarely fatal. However, some groups are likely at higher risk of severe illness, including children under age 8, people who have weakened immune systems or are pregnant, and people with history of atopic dermatitis or eczema.

What to do if you have symptoms:

- Contact a health care provider right away for testing and guidance.
- Isolate away from others.
- If monkeypox is confirmed: avoid skin-to-skin or face-to-face contact, including sexual contact, with others until you are no longer considered infectious.

The Health Department will contact you if you are diagnosed with monkeypox.

How to prevent Monkeypox:

- If you have symptoms, stay away from others. Contact your health care provider for testing and guidance.
- Avoid sexual activity with people who have flu-like illness or unexplained rashes.
- Wash your hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based sanitizer after contact with infected animals or people.
- Use protective equipment (respirator, disposable gowns, gloves, and eye protection if possible) when caring for sick people.
- Avoid contact with animals that may be infected, such as sick or dead animals in areas where the virus is found.
- Avoid contact with any materials that have been in contact with a sick animal or person.

This fact sheet is for information only and is not meant to be used for self-diagnosis or as a substitute for consultation with a health care provider. For more information contact your health care provider or visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at www.cdc.gov.