



# MONKEYPOX FAQS

## BASICS

### **What is monkeypox?**

Monkeypox is a rare, zoonotic disease that is caused by infection with the monkeypox virus. Zoonotic diseases are infectious diseases that can be transmitted from animals to humans, humans to animals, and humans to humans. Monkeypox cases are rare in the U.S., but cases have happened that were associated with international travel or importing animals from areas where the disease is more common.

### **How dangerous is it?**

While mild or severe cases can be extremely painful and require hospitalization, over 99% of people who get this form of the disease are likely to survive. However, people with weakened immune systems, children under 8 years of age, people with a history of skin conditions, and people who are pregnant or breastfeeding may be more likely to get seriously ill or die.

### **Am I at risk to get monkeypox?**

The risk of monkeypox in the United States is believed to be low, however, cases have happened. Monkeypox does not spread easily between people, and the time between exposure and when the symptoms start gives health officials more time to track down contacts and take action to stop the spread. People who do not show any signs of monkeypox symptoms cannot infect others with the virus.

### **Is monkeypox related to COVID-19?**

No, monkeypox is a completely different disease and it is not related to COVID-19.

### **Is monkeypox a sexually transmitted disease (STD) or a sexually transmitted infection (STI)?**

No, monkeypox is not an STD or STI. A person can get infected with monkeypox during sex, but close contact during sex is not the primary means of transmission. Monkeypox is transmitted through direct contact with the infectious rash, scabs, or body fluids.

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## SYMPTOMS & SPREAD

### What are the symptoms of monkeypox?

Symptoms will often include rashes that can look like pimples or blisters. These can appear on the face, inside the mouth, and in other parts of the body such as hands, feet, chest genitals, or anus. Rashes will go through different stages before healing completely, a process that can remain for several weeks. Some individuals who have monkeypox will only experience rashes, however, other symptoms that are common with monkeypox include:

- Runny nose
- Headache
- Muscle aches and backache
- Swollen lymph nodes
- Chills
- Exhaustion

### How does monkeypox spread?

Monkeypox spreads in different ways. The virus can spread from person to person through direct contact with the infectious rash, scabs, or body fluids. It also can be spread by respiratory secretions during prolonged, face-to-face contact, or during intimate physical contact, such as kissing, cuddling, or sex. In addition, pregnant people can spread the virus to their fetus through the placenta.

Touching items (such as clothing or linens) that previously touched the infectious rash or body fluids of an infected person is another way monkeypox spreads. It's also possible for people to get monkeypox from infected animals, either by being scratched or bitten by the animal or by eating meat or using products from an infected animal.

People who do not have monkeypox symptoms cannot spread the virus to others. 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.

### How long does it take for someone infected with monkeypox to show symptoms?

Monkeypox symptoms usually start to show within two weeks of exposure to the virus.

### How is monkeypox diagnosed?

If a patient is suspected of having monkeypox, a health care provider will collect a sample from the rash and send it for initial testing to know if it is in the same pox virus family as monkeypox. The decision to test will be made in coordination with your local public health agency. Further testing will likely be needed by the CDC to confirm if it is monkeypox.

### What do I do if I have symptoms?

See a healthcare provider if you notice a new or unexplained rash or other monkeypox symptoms.

- Remind the healthcare provider that monkeypox is circulating.
- Avoid close contact (including intimate physical contact) with others until a healthcare provider examines you.
- Avoid close contact with pets or other animals until a healthcare provider examines you.
- If you're waiting for test results, follow the same precautions.
- If your test result is positive, stay isolated until your rash has healed, all scabs have fallen off, and a fresh layer of intact skin has formed.

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## Who is considered high risk?

- Individuals who are immunocompromised
- Young children
- Pregnant and breastfeeding women
- Individuals with skin conditions that cause extreme shedding of skin layers
- Individuals with a history or presence of atopic dermatitis
- Individuals with other active exfoliative or shedding skin conditions

## Could my pet get monkeypox?

Monkeypox is zoonotic, meaning it can spread between animals and people. However, CDC does not currently believe that monkeypox poses a high risk to pets. We are continuing to monitor the situation closely.

## SYMPTOMS & SPREAD

### Is a vaccine available yet?

Yes. The JYNNEOS vaccine is a two-dose, safe vaccine that is administered as a live virus that is non-replicating. The vaccine is used for protection against smallpox and monkeypox in individuals 18 years and older determined to be at high risk for smallpox or monkeypox infection. People who receive JYNNEOS are not considered vaccinated until they receive both vaccine doses, which are given 4 weeks apart. Full protection is not conferred until two weeks after receipt of the second dose. However, it is NOT recommended for everyone and will be provided to residents pending authorization from the local health department in partnership with a primary care provider or approved medical group.

The vaccine is available only to those individuals who have been directly exposed to monkeypox and/or are at high risk of contracting the monkeypox virus. Residents seeking a monkeypox vaccine should first seek guidance from their primary care provider.

### Am I eligible for the JYNNEOS vaccine?

In the United States and Houston, there is currently a limited supply of JYNNEOS vaccine, though more is expected in the weeks and months ahead.

HCPH and HHD are committed to the proper distribution of the vaccine. The monkeypox vaccine is only for eligible residents who meet the criteria below and is subject to availability (first-come-first-served basis).

#### Group A – Invitation ONLY:

- People confirmed by Public Health to have had high- or intermediate-risk with someone with monkeypox, as defined by CDC.
- People who attend an event or venue where there was a high risk of exposure to someone with confirmed monkeypox virus through skin-to-skin or sexual contact. Public Health will work with event /venue organizers to identify people who may have been present and at risk of exposure while at the venue.

**\*Public Health or clinic partners will directly communicate to eligible residents on how and where to access the JYNNEOS vaccine.**

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## **Group B – People 18 years of age or older who:**

- Were diagnosed with gonorrhea or early syphilis within the past 3 months or
- Are on HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP); or
- Attended or worked at a commercial sex venue or other venues where they had anonymous sex or sex with multiple partners (e.g., saunas, bathhouses, sex clubs, sex parties) within the past 14 days.

## **People who fall under these eligibility requirements can get vaccinated several ways:**

- Contact your healthcare provider to find out if they are a monkeypox vaccine provider.
- Contact their local health department to determine eligibility. If applicable, they may be asked to provide the following:
  - Proof of gonorrhea or early syphilis infection in the last 3 months in the form of a lab report (the proof can be shown from your phone); OR
  - A monkeypox provider attestation form completed by your doctor (these attestations forms would be provided by a doctor if the patient meets the eligibility requirements but they are not a monkeypox vaccine provider)

## **Please take note:**

- Residents who DO NOT meet the criteria will NOT receive the vaccine at the moment.
- Not everyone who meets that criteria will receive the vaccine if we run out.

## **Is there a monkeypox hotline?**

Yes. Residents who have questions regarding testing, vaccinations, and more monkeypox guidance are encouraged to call 832-927-0707.

## **Can I get the vaccine from HCPH?**

Yes, if you have been directly exposed to someone with monkeypox or think you are at high risk, please call our hotline at 832-927-0707. We will work with you to determine whether you are a candidate and provide vaccination as appropriate.

## **How can monkeypox be prevented?**

There are several things that can be done to prevent infections with monkeypox:

- Avoid close, skin-to-skin contact with people who have a rash that looks like monkeypox.
- Do not touch the rash or scabs of a person with monkeypox symptoms
- Do not kiss, hug, cuddle or have sex with a person who has monkeypox symptoms
- Do not share utensils or cups with a person who has monkeypox symptoms
- Do not handle or touch the bedding, towels, or clothing of a person with monkeypox symptoms
- Wash your hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- If you are sick with monkeypox, isolate at home and stay in separate room or area away from people or pets you live with, when possible.

## **I have had chickenpox, am I protected from monkeypox?**

No, monkeypox is not related to chickenpox.

## **If I had the smallpox vaccine previously, am I protected?**

Yes, you are. Because monkeypox and smallpox viruses are genetically similar, vaccines developed to protect against smallpox viruses may be used to prevent monkeypox infections.