

Monkeypox*



What is Monkeypox?

Monkeypox is a rare disease that is caused by infection with monkeypox virus. Monkeypox virus belongs to the *Orthopoxvirus* genus in the family *Poxviridae*. The *Orthopoxvirus* genus also includes variola virus (which causes smallpox), vaccinia virus (used in the smallpox vaccine), and cowpox virus. In 2022, monkeypox infections began to occur outside of Africa including the United States.

Please see the CDC website [2022 United States Monkeypox Response](#) for the latest information.

How do persons get infected with Monkeypox?

Transmission of monkeypox virus occurs when a person comes into contact with the virus from an animal, human, or materials contaminated with the virus. The virus enters the body through broken skin (even if not visible), respiratory tract, or the mucous membranes (eyes, nose, or mouth). Animal-to-human transmission may occur by bite or scratch, bush meat preparation, direct contact with body fluids or lesion material, or indirect contact with lesion material, such as through contaminated bedding. Human-to-human transmission is thought to occur primarily through large respiratory droplets. Respiratory droplets generally cannot travel more than a few feet, so prolonged face-to-face contact is required. Other human-to-human methods of transmission include direct contact with body fluids or lesion material, and indirect contact with lesion material, such as through contaminated clothing or linens.

What are the symptoms of Monkeypox?

In humans, the symptoms of monkeypox are similar to but milder than the symptoms of smallpox. Monkeypox begins with fever, headache, muscle aches, and exhaustion. The incubation period for monkeypox is usually 7–14 days but can range from 5–21 days.

The illness begins with:

- Fever
- Headache
- Muscle aches
- Backache
- Swollen lymph nodes
- Chills
- Exhaustion

Within 1 to 3 days (sometimes longer) after the appearance of fever, the patient develops a rash, often beginning on the face then spreading to other parts of the body. The illness typically lasts for 2–4 weeks.

What are some tips for preventing Monkeypox?

There are number of measures that can be taken to prevent infection with monkeypox virus:

- Avoid contact with animals that could harbor the virus (including animals that are sick or that have been found dead in areas where monkeypox occurs).
- Avoid contact with any materials, such as bedding, that has been in contact with a sick animal.
- Isolate infected patients from others who could be at risk for infection.
- Practice good hand hygiene after contact with infected animals or humans. For example, washing your hands with soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Use personal protective equipment (PPE) when caring for patients.

How is a Monkeypox infection treated?

Many individuals infected with monkeypox virus have a [mild, self-limiting disease course](#). However, the prognosis for monkeypox depends on multiple factors such as previous vaccination status, initial health status, concurrent illnesses, and comorbidities among others. Persons who should be considered for treatment following consultation with CDC might include:

- Persons with severe disease (e.g., hemorrhagic disease, confluent lesions, sepsis, encephalitis, or other conditions requiring hospitalization)
- Persons who may be at high risk of severe disease:
 - Persons with immunocompromise (e.g., human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immune deficiency syndrome infection, leukemia, lymphoma, generalized malignancy, solid organ transplantation, therapy with alkylating agents, antimetabolites, radiation, tumor necrosis factor inhibitors, high-dose corticosteroids, being a recipient with hematopoietic stem cell transplant <24 months post-transplant or ≥24 months but with graft-versus-host disease or disease relapse, or having autoimmune disease with immunodeficiency as a clinical component)
 - Pediatric populations, particularly patients younger than 8 years of age
 - Pregnant or breastfeeding women
 - Persons with one or more complications (e.g., secondary bacterial skin infection; gastroenteritis with severe nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, or dehydration; bronchopneumonia; concurrent disease or other comorbidities)
- Persons with monkeypox virus aberrant infections that include its accidental implantation in eyes, mouth, or other anatomical areas where monkeypox virus infection might constitute a special hazard (e.g., the genitals or anus)

For more information about monkeypox, please visit the [CDC website](#).