

## **ABOUT MONKEYPOX**

### **What is monkeypox?**

Monkeypox is a rare disease caused by infection with the monkeypox virus. Monkeypox virus is part of the *Orthopoxvirus* family of viruses which includes smallpox, but is not the same as smallpox.

### **What are the symptoms of monkeypox?**

Symptoms of monkeypox can include:

- Fever
- Headache
- Muscle aches and backache
- Swollen lymph nodes
- Chills
- Feeling very tired
- A rash that can look like pimples or blisters that appears on the face, inside the mouth, and on other parts of the body such as the hands, feet, chest, genitals, or anus

### **Is monkeypox deadly?**

Infections caused by the strain that is currently spreading in the United States are rarely fatal. Over 99% of people who get this form of the disease are likely to survive. People with weak immune systems, a history of skin problems such as eczema, or who are pregnant or breastfeeding may be more likely to get seriously ill or die. Even though rarely fatal, monkeypox can be very painful and the rash may cause permanent scars.

## **TRANSMISSION**

### **How does monkeypox spread?**

Monkeypox can spread in different ways. It can spread from person to person through direct contact with the rash, scabs, or body fluids. It can also spread by face-to-face contact through respiratory droplets, or during close contact such as kissing, cuddling, or sex. Scabs are much less infectious than respiratory secretions. Pregnant people can spread the virus to their fetus through the placenta.

Touching items such as clothes, towels, bed linens, etc. that were in contact with the rash or body fluids can also spread the virus. Handle laundry carefully as there have been reports of other viruses in the *Orthopoxvirus* family spreading from infected fabric and bedding getting into the air. This creates an infection risk. Never shake or handle the linens roughly, as this may contaminate the air, surfaces, and others with infectious particles.

A person can also get monkeypox from infected animals, either by bites or scratches, or by eating meat or using products made from infected animals.

## AFTER MONKEYPOX DIAGNOSIS

### **What do I do if I am diagnosed with monkeypox?**

If you are diagnosed with monkeypox, or another *Orthopoxvirus*, avoid other people until your symptoms have gone away and the rash has healed completely. This includes:

- Avoiding sex or being intimate with anyone until all your sores have healed and you have a fresh layer of skin formed.
- Avoiding crowds.
- Avoiding contact with animals including pets, domestic animals, and wildlife.
- Rashes on the body should be covered with long sleeves or pants to avoid touching other people.
- If rashes can't be easily covered, stay away from other people and pets as much as possible.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water. Use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Wash surfaces and materials that you have touched while you had symptoms, including bedding, towels, clothing, sex toys, and surfaces such as door handles or counter tops. Standard household cleaning and disinfecting products may be used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

### **How long is a person infected with monkeypox able to spread the virus?**

Monkeypox can spread from the time the first symptoms start until the rash has fully healed and a fresh layer of skin has formed. This usually takes two to four weeks.

### **How can the spread of monkeypox be prevented in the home?**

Most people with monkeypox do not need to be in a hospital and can recover at home. People with monkeypox should isolate away from others in the home until the rash has fully healed, the scabs have fallen off, and a fresh layer of intact skin has formed.

People with monkeypox should follow these recommendations until cleared by state or local public health officials:

- General:
  - Do not leave the home except as required for emergencies or follow-up medical care.
  - **Avoid close contact with others.**
  - Do not engage in sexual activity that involves direct physical contact.
  - Do not share potentially contaminated items, such as bed linens, clothing, towels, wash cloths, drinking glasses or eating utensils.
  - **Washing hands** with soap and water, or using an alcohol-based hand rub should be done frequently by people infected with monkeypox and their household contacts after touching rash material, clothing, linens, or environmental surfaces that may have had contact with rash material.
  - Routinely clean and disinfect commonly touched surfaces and items, such as counters or light switches, using a disinfectant (such as bleach) in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
  - **Wear well-fitting mask** when in close contact with others at home. Caregivers should wear a respirator or medical mask also when they are within 6 feet of the person who is infected with monkeypox for more than a brief encounter.
  - Avoid use of contact lenses to prevent spreading the infection to the eyes.
  - Avoid shaving rash-covered areas of the body as this can lead to spread of the virus.

- Bathroom usage:
  - If possible, use a separate bathroom if there are others who live in the same household.
  - If there is not a separate bathroom in the home, the patient should clean and disinfect surfaces such as counters, toilet seats, faucets, using a disinfectant (such as bleach) after using a shared space. This may include during activities like showering, using the toilet, or changing bandages that cover the rash. Consider disposable glove use while cleaning if rash is present on the hands.
- Limit contamination within household:
  - Try to avoid contaminating upholstered furniture and other porous materials that cannot be laundered by placing coversheets, waterproof mattress covers, blankets, or tarps over these surfaces.
  - **Cover all skin rashes** to the extent possible by wearing long sleeves or long pants. Gloves can be considered for covering rash on the hands when not in isolation such as when receiving medical care.
  - Additional precautions such as steam cleaning can be considered if there is concern about contamination.
- When possible, the person with monkeypox should change their own bandages and handle contaminated linens while wearing disposable gloves, followed by immediate handwashing after removing gloves.
  - As a last resort, if assistance is needed with these activities, a household member should avoid extensive contact and wear, at a minimum, disposable medical gloves and a well-fitting mask or respirator. Any clothing that contacts the rash during dressing changes should be immediately laundered. Gloves should be disposed of after use, followed by handwashing.

**Do I need to do anything special with the medical waste from caring for a person with monkeypox?**  
There are guidelines for properly disposing of the medical waste that comes from caring for a person with monkeypox such as dressings, bandages, or disposable gloves.

**Is it safe to have visitors while isolating at home?**

No. It is important to avoid contact with unaffected individuals until the rash has resolved, the scabs have fallen off, and a fresh layer of intact skin has formed. Friends, family or others without an essential need to be in the home **should not visit**.

- Isolate in a room or area separate from other household members and pets when possible.
- Limit use of spaces, items, and food that are shared with other household members.
- Do not share dishes and other eating utensils. It is not necessary for the infected person to use separate utensils if properly washed. Wash soiled dishes and eating utensils in a dishwasher or by hand with warm water and soap.