

## WHAT IS MONKEYPOX?

Monkeypox is a rare contagious rash illness caused by the monkeypox virus. Most people have mild illness and recover without treatment.

In the 2022 outbreak, cases are occurring in many countries or areas where this infection is not usually found, including in the U.S. and Virginia. Most, but not all, cases have been among gay, bisexual, or other men who have sex with men (MSM). This group, particularly MSM with multiple sex partners, is currently at greatest risk.

## HOW DOES MONKEYPOX SPREAD?

In this outbreak, most people have become infected with monkeypox when they come into close contact with an infected person. Spread can occur from touching skin lesions, bodily fluids, or clothing or linens that have been in contact with an infected person. Spread can also occur during prolonged, face-to-face contact.

Monkeypox **can spread** from person to person through:

- Sexual or intimate contact (including oral, anal, and vaginal sex)
- Hugging, kissing, cuddling, and massage
- Sharing a bed, towel, or clothes that have not been washed

Monkeypox **does not spread** from person to person through:

- Walking by someone who is infected
- Casual conversation with someone who is infected

## WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF MONKEYPOX?

- Skin rash on any part of your body (even if it is only 1 or 2 spots). For some people, this rash may be their only symptom.
- Fever
- Chills
- Headache
- Muscle aches and back aches
- Swollen lymph nodes

Symptoms usually appear **6–13** days after exposure, with a range of **5–21** days.



Photo credit: UK Health Security Agency

## WHAT DO I DO IF I HAVE SYMPTOMS?

- **If you have symptoms, you should separate yourself from other people and pets, cover your lesions, and contact your healthcare provider.**
- It is important to call ahead before going to a healthcare facility and let them know that you are concerned about monkeypox.
- You should avoid close physical contact with others until you have talked with your provider.

## HOW CAN MONKEYPOX BE PREVENTED?

- Avoid close, skin-to-skin contact with another person's rash or scabs. Avoid kissing, hugging, cuddling or having sex with someone who is infected. Do not share eating utensils and cups. Do not share bedding, towels, or personal grooming devices.
- Wash your hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer after contact with infected individuals.
- Wear a mask if you think you have monkeypox and need to have close face-to-face contact with other people or need to have close contact with someone who may be infected.
- Consider the events you attend and your behavior at those events. If there is close, prolonged skin-to-skin contact, the risk of spreading monkeypox is higher.
- Vaccines are available for the prevention of monkeypox. Visit the VDH website to see if you're eligible to get the vaccine.

