

Facts & DETAILS

Monkeypox

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Monkeypox in the United States: 2022

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is currently tracking multiple monkeypox cases that have been reported in several countries that do not normally report monkeypox, including the United States.

As of May 2022, it is not clear how most of the cases were exposed to monkeypox. Some of the cases self-identify as men who have sex with men, while others lived with someone who developed monkeypox. The risk to the general public remains low.

What should I do if I think I have monkeypox?

Contact your healthcare provider if you have monkeypox symptoms and the below risk factors:

- Travel to Central or West Africa, parts of Europe where monkeypox cases have been reported, or other areas with confirmed monkeypox cases during the month before symptoms began
- Contact with a person with confirmed or suspected monkeypox
- Men who regularly have close or intimate contact with other men

What is monkeypox?

Monkeypox is a disease that is caused by infection with monkeypox virus.

How common is monkeypox?

Monkeypox is typically rare outside of Central and West Africa. The risk of monkeypox for the general public in the United States is low.

How do people become infected?

People become infected through contact with skin lesions or bodily fluids of infected animals or humans or through contact with contaminated materials (ex. clothing). Animal-to-human transmission can also occur from a bite, scratch, or bush meat preparation. Human-to-human transmission may occur through respiratory droplets (ex. coughing or sneezing), but prolonged face-to-face contact is required.

What are the signs and symptoms of monkeypox?

In humans, general symptoms are mild. Monkeypox symptoms begin with fever, headache, and swollen lymph nodes, followed by a rash. The lesions typically progress through several stages before falling off (macules, papules, vesicles, pustules, and scabs).

In Africa, monkeypox causes deaths in as many as 1 in 10 people who are infected.

After exposure, monkeypox symptoms typically appear within 7-14 days (range 5-21 days).

How long can a person spread monkeypox?

Someone with monkeypox can spread the disease until all lesions have healed, all scabs have fallen off, and a new layer of intact skin has formed. This usually occurs 2-4 weeks after symptom onset.

How can you prevent monkeypox?

The best ways to prevent monkeypox include

- Avoiding contact with animals that could harbor the virus (including animals that are sick or are found dead in areas where monkeypox occurs)
- Avoiding contact with any materials, such as bedding, that has been in contact with a sick animal
- Isolating infected patients from others who could be at risk for infection
- Washing your hands with soap and water after contact with infected animals or humans



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316-660-9370 525 N. Main Suite 315 Wichita KS 67203 www.sedgwickcounty.org

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Who is at risk monkeypox?

Typically, people at highest risk for monkeypox are those who travel to Central or West Africa. People with highest risk for severe disease are those with weakened immune systems, children younger than 8 years old, pregnant or breastfeeding women, and people who have complications from monkeypox.

How is monkeypox treated?

Monkeypox is caused by a virus, so antibiotics won't work. Currently, there is no specific treatment approved for monkeypox. In certain situations, antivirals developed for smallpox virus treatment may be used as treatment.

For More Information:

Sedgwick County Health Department
Epidemiology Program
1900 E. 9th St.
Wichita, KS 67214
(316) 660-7300
www.sedgwickcounty.org



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