



# Frequently Asked Questions About Monkeypox

*The Maryland Department of Health is dedicated to protecting and improving the health and safety of all Marylanders through disease prevention, access to care, quality management and community engagement. Visit [health.maryland.gov/monkeypox](https://health.maryland.gov/monkeypox). Follow us at <http://www.twitter.com/MDHealthDept> and at [Facebook.com/MDHealthDept](https://www.facebook.com/MDHealthDept).*

## What is monkeypox?

Monkeypox is a rare disease caused by infection with the monkeypox virus. Cases have been reported in the United States—where it isn't usually found. Monkeypox infection can make you sick, often with flu-like symptoms and a rash that can look like pimples or blisters. Monkeypox is rarely fatal. For the general public, the current risk of getting monkeypox is low.

## Am I at risk of getting monkeypox?

For the general public, the current risk of getting monkeypox is low. Recent cases have been reported more frequently among gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men (GBMSM) and who may have multiple or unknown sexual partners. However, monkeypox can spread to anyone through close, personal, or skin-to-skin contact.

## What are the symptoms of monkeypox?

Monkeypox typically begins with [symptoms](#) like fever, headache, muscle aches, and exhaustion which appear 5 to 21 days after the individual was infected. Often within 1 to 3 days of the onset of fever, infected individuals develop a rash that can look like pimples, sores or blisters. The rash may appear on the face before spreading to other parts of the body, including the hands, feet, and genitals.

## What should I do if I have symptoms of monkeypox?

If you have a new or unexplained rash, sores or other [symptoms](#) of monkeypox, you should talk to your healthcare provider. **If you don't have a healthcare provider or health insurance, [visit the Maryland Department of Health website to find a health department near you](#).** When you talk to the healthcare provider, remind them that the monkeypox virus may be circulating in the community. Avoid close contact with anyone, including intimate physical contact and sex, until you have talked to a healthcare provider and while you wait for test results.

## How does monkeypox spread?

Monkeypox can spread to anyone through close, personal, or skin-to-skin contact. This includes:

- Direct skin-to-skin contact with monkeypox rash, sores, or scabs
- Contact with materials like clothing, bedding, or towels that have been used by someone with monkeypox
- By kissing or other face-to-face contact through saliva or respiratory droplets

Additionally,

- A pregnant person can spread the virus to their fetus through the placenta.
- The virus can spread through fluid or pus from monkeypox sores, though we don't know if the virus can be present in semen or vaginal fluids.

Monkeypox has not been shown to be spread through casual contact, such as being in the same area, having casual conversation, or briefly touching shared items like doorknobs.

People who do not have monkeypox [symptoms](#) cannot spread the virus to others.

## What can be done to prevent monkeypox?

There are a number of ways to help prevent monkeypox infection.

- Avoid contact with any materials, such as bedding and towels, that have been in contact with a person or animal with monkeypox.
- Wash your hands or use an alcohol-based sanitizer after contact with a person or animal with monkeypox.
- Avoid contact with animals that may harbor the virus, including animals that are sick or that have been found dead, especially in areas where human monkeypox typically occurs.
- Use [appropriate personal protective equipment \(PPE\)](#) when caring for a person with monkeypox.

## What treatments are available for monkeypox?

There are no treatments specifically for monkeypox virus infection. However, since the monkeypox virus is a part of the same family of viruses as smallpox, antiviral drugs and vaccines developed to protect against smallpox may be used to prevent and treat monkeypox virus infections. A healthcare provider may recommend an antiviral, such as tecovirimat (TPOXX), for a patient who is more likely to get seriously ill—like a patient with a weakened immune system.

### **What vaccines are available for monkeypox?**

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has licensed two [vaccines](#) for use in preventing monkeypox - ACAM2000 and Jynneos. [ACAM2000](#) is not recommended for some people. The supply of [Jynneos](#) is more limited.

The federal government is managing [how much vaccine is available](#) to cities and states based on the number of monkeypox cases and other factors. A limited number of vaccine doses are available to individuals at highest risk in some U.S. jurisdictions, including Maryland. Authorized healthcare providers will offer the vaccine to eligible highest-risk individuals who meet certain criteria. This information will change as more vaccine becomes available.

### **Can wearing a condom during sex reduce the risk of monkeypox?**

Monkeypox is spread through close, personal, often skin-to-skin contact. We do not know if monkeypox is found in semen, vaginal fluid, or feces. Condoms can provide protection against sexually transmitted infection (STI), but may not prevent the spread of monkeypox. Monkeypox may be spread through sexual contact but it is not considered an STI. If you have had sex in the past 14 days and are experiencing any new symptoms, you should seek STI screening from your healthcare provider or a [local health department near you](#).

### **What should I do if I have monkeypox?**

If a healthcare provider tells you that you have monkeypox, follow the treatment and prevention recommendations from the provider. Avoid close contact with anyone, including intimate physical contact and sex, until all sores have healed and you have a fresh layer of skin formed. You may be asked about the people you have had close, personal, or sexual contact with within the last 21 days. This is to help stop the spread of monkeypox.

### **Can monkeypox make my pet sick?**

Monkeypox can spread between people and animals. However, the current risk to pets is believed to be low. People with monkeypox should avoid interacting with animals and find someone to care for their pets while they recover. You can find information about pets and monkeypox on [the CDC website](#).

### **Where can I find more information about monkeypox in Maryland?**

For more information and resources, [visit the MDH website](#). Follow us on social media at <http://www.twitter.com/MDHealthDept> and <https://www.facebook.com/MDHealthDept>.

**Sources:**

[Maryland Department of Health](#)

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

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