

Monkeypox and HIV: What You Need to Know

What is Monkeypox?

Monkeypox is a rare disease caused by the monkeypox virus.

There are two types of monkeypox virus: West African and Congo Basin. Infections in the U.S. outbreak are from the West African type. Although this type rarely causes death, people might have permanent scarring from the rash.

Monkeypox is part of the same family of viruses that causes smallpox. The smallpox vaccine helped protect people against the monkeypox virus.

After the World Health Organization declared monkeypox eradicated (wiped out) in 1980, the vaccine was no longer given.

Why is it Spreading Now?

In May 2022 an outbreak of monkeypox spread across several countries that don't normally report monkeypox, including the United States.

At this time, the risk of monkeypox in the United States is believed to be low. Currently, this outbreak is largely affecting gay, bisexual, or other men who have sex with men.

How is it Spread?

The virus can be spread 3 ways by:

- direct contact:
 - with body fluids or skin lesions (from the monkeypox rash)
 - through respiratory droplets breathed in during extended intimate contact (kissing, face-to-face contact or sex)



Credits: NHS England High Consequence Infectious Diseases Network
(Centers for Disease Control & Prevention website)

- touching items that were used by an infected person (such as clothing, bedding or towels)
- a bite or scratch from an infected animal:

Are People Who Have HIV More Likely to Get Monkeypox?

The Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) doesn't know if having HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) increases the likelihood you would get monkeypox.

The CDC is monitoring monkeypox among people living with HIV. With the current outbreak, there does not appear to be more severe monkeypox illness in people who have HIV and are virally suppressed (having less than 200 copies of HIV per milliliter of blood).

People with HIV who are not virally suppressed may be at increased risk for severe illness and death from monkeypox.

If you have HIV, ask your health care provider if you should take antiviral medicine or receive a vaccination.

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What are the Monkeypox Symptoms?

Symptoms of monkeypox include:

- rash that looks 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
 - The rash goes through different stages before fully healing.
 - It starts as a flat rash then changes to raised bumps filled with fluid.
 - The rash then crusts over and scabs develop.
- fever or chills
- headache
- body and muscle aches
- fatigue (feeling exhausted)
- sore throat, cough, nasal congestion
- swollen lymph nodes.

How Long Can Monkeypox be Spread?

Monkeypox can spread from the time symptoms start until the rash has fully healed and a new layer of skin has formed.

Symptoms usually appear 1 to 2 weeks after infection. The illness typically lasts 2 to 4 weeks.

When Should You See Your Health Care Provider?

Call your health care provider if you think you have monkeypox or if you have close contact with someone who has monkeypox.

Your health care provider will decide if you should be tested. They will swab your skin lesions or the inside of your mouth.

The samples will be sent to a lab for testing. Your health care provider will contact you with the results.

Contact your health care provider if you have any questions or concerns.

Is There a Monkeypox Treatment for People With HIV?

There are no treatments specifically for monkeypox virus infections. There are antiviral medicines used to treat smallpox that may be used to treat monkeypox infections.

- At this time, the CDC doesn't have enough data to know whether people who have HIV and are virally suppressed might benefit from taking medicine if they get monkeypox.
- Your health care provider may consider using antiviral medicines such as tecovirimat (TPOXX[®]) or vaccinia immune globulin. This medicine can be prescribed if you are newly diagnosed with HIV or if you have HIV and are not virally suppressed.
- Data is limited, but most HIV treatment can be safely given with monkeypox treatment and smallpox vaccines.

Tell your health care provider what medicines you are taking to help determine if they may interact with the antiviral medicine.

Is There a Safe Monkeypox Vaccine for People With HIV?

Vaccines that were developed to protect against smallpox viruses may be used to prevent monkeypox infections. Vaccines may be recommended for:

- people who have had or may have contact with someone who has monkeypox
- people who had a presumed exposure such as men who have sex with multiple sexual partners during the last 14 days in an area known to have confirmed monkeypox cases.

There are two licensed vaccines to prevent smallpox. Only JYNNEOS is approved to prevent monkeypox in people age 18 years and older.

The vaccine prevents monkeypox infection 85 percent of the time if it is received within 4 days of exposure. If it is received after 4 days, the vaccine may not prevent infection but it will make the symptoms not as severe.

The JYNNEOS vaccine has been studied in people with HIV who are virally suppressed and they do not have more or severe side effects from the vaccine than people who did not have HIV.

The most common side effects are injection site pain, redness, swelling and itching. Other symptoms were muscle pain, headache, fatigue, nausea, and chills.

More data are needed to know if this vaccine is tolerated by people newly diagnosed with HIV or by people with HIV who are not virally suppressed.

The other vaccine, ACAM2000, is not recommended for people who have HIV because of the increased risk of side effects.

If you think you may be eligible for a vaccine, contact:

- your health care provider
- Minnesota Department of Health
 - health.state.mn.us/diseases/monkeypox/vaccine.html
- Wisconsin Department of Health & Services
 - dhs.wisconsin.gov/monkeypox/vaccine.htm

How Can You Help Prevent Getting or Spreading Monkeypox?

- Avoid close, skin-to-skin contact with people who have a rash that looks like monkeypox.
- Do not touch the rash, sores or scabs of a person with monkeypox.
- Do not kiss or have face-to-face contact with a person who has monkeypox.
- Do not hug, cuddle or have any type of direct sexual contact with someone with monkeypox.
- Have sex with no personal contact.
- Consider having sex with your clothes on or covering areas where rash is present, reducing as much skin-to-skin contact as possible.
- Limit your number of sex partners to maybe reduce the possibility of exposure.
- Avoid contact with objects, fabrics and materials that a person with monkeypox has used.
 - Do not share eating utensils or cups with a person with monkeypox.
 - Do not handle or touch the bedding, towels, or clothing of a person with monkeypox.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, especially before eating, touching your face, and after you use the bathroom.

Resources

- Centers for Disease Control & Prevention
 - cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/faq.html
- Minnesota Department of Health
 - health.state.mn.us/diseases/monkeypox/basics.html

Information adapted by the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, and the Minnesota Department of Health.