What is Monkeypox?
Monkeypox is a rare disease caused by infection with the monkeypox virus. Monkeypox virus is part of the same family of viruses as the variola virus which causes smallpox. Monkeypox symptoms are similar to smallpox symptoms, but milder, and it is rarely fatal.

Who is at risk of getting infected?
At this time, the risk of monkeypox in the United States is believed to be low. Monkeypox doesn’t spread easily between people. However, anyone in close contact with a person with monkeypox can get it and should take steps to protect themselves. People who don’t have monkeypox symptoms can’t spread the virus to others.

How does Monkeypox spread?
Monkeypox spreads in different ways. The virus can spread from person-to-person through direct contact with the infectious rash, scabs, or body fluids. It also can spread through respiratory secretions during prolonged, face-to-face contact, or during intimate physical contact, such as kissing, cuddling, or sex. In addition, pregnant people can spread the virus to their fetus through the placenta.

Touching items (such as clothing or linens) that previously touched the infectious rash or body fluids is another way monkeypox spreads. It’s also possible for people to get monkeypox from infected animals. This occurs when the person is either scratched or bitten by an infected animal or by eating meat or using products from an infected animal.

People who don’t have monkeypox symptoms can’t spread the virus to others.

Monkeypox can spread from the time symptoms start until the rash has fully healed and a fresh layer of skin has formed. The illness typically lasts 2-4 weeks.

What should I do if I’m pregnant or breastfeeding/chestfeeding and I have symptoms suspicious for Monkeypox?
Information about monkeypox infection during pregnancy is limited. The symptoms of monkeypox are the same regardless of whether you’re pregnant or not. Most people with infection have a mild, self-limiting illness. However, more severe symptoms of the disease may require hospitalization. Monkeypox virus is known to spread to the fetus through the placenta. It is important to immediately inform your healthcare provider about your possible exposure and symptoms in order to receive the appropriate testing, medications, and management.
Consider delaying breastfeeding/chestfeeding until all lesions have resolved, the scabs have fallen off, and a fresh layer of intact skin has formed. Breast pumping may allow parents to maintain their milk supply during a breastfeeding pause. However, breast pumping and milk storage should be discussed with your healthcare provider and the baby’s pediatric healthcare provider prior to initiating.

**Can I get monkeypox from having sex?**

Even though it isn’t considered a sexually transmitted infection, monkeypox can spread during intimate physical contact between people. This contact can happen when you have sex, including:

- Oral, anal, and vaginal sex, or touching the genitals or anus of a person with monkeypox
- Hugging, massaging, kissing, or talking closely
- Touching fabrics, shared surfaces, and objects, such as bedding, towels, and sex toys, that were used by a person with monkeypox

Anyone can get monkeypox if they have close personal contact with someone who has symptoms of monkeypox.

**What should someone do if they have new or unexplained rash or other symptoms?**

- Avoid sex or being intimate with anyone until you have been checked out by a healthcare provider.
- If you don’t have a provider or health insurance, visit a public health clinic near you.
- When you see a healthcare provider, wear a mask, and remind them that this virus is circulating in the area.
- Avoid gatherings, especially if they involve close, personal, skin-to-skin contact.

Think about the people you have had close, personal, or sexual contact during the last 21 days, including people you met through dating apps. To help stop the spread, you might be asked to share this information if you have received a monkeypox diagnosis.

**Can someone get monkeypox from attending a party or other social event?**

People can get monkeypox if they have close, skin-to-skin contact with someone who has monkeypox. Early indications are that events with activities in which people engage in close, sustained skin-to-skin contact have resulted in cases of monkeypox. If you plan to attend an event, consider how much close, personal, skin-to-skin contact is likely to occur there.

**What treatments are available for monkeypox?**

There are no treatments specifically for monkeypox virus infections. However, because of genetic similarities in the viruses, antiviral drugs used to treat smallpox may be used to treat monkeypox infections. Antivirals, such as tecovirimat (TPOXX), may be recommended for people who are more likely to get severely ill, like patients with weakened immune systems.
Is there a vaccine to prevent monkeypox?
Because monkeypox and smallpox viruses are genetically similar, vaccines developed to protect against smallpox viruses may be used to prevent monkeypox infections.

The U.S. government has two stockpiled vaccines — JYNNEOS and ACAM2000 — that can prevent monkeypox in people who are exposed to the virus. Vaccines may be recommended for people who have had or may have contact with someone who has monkeypox, or for healthcare and public health workers who may be exposed to the virus.

Where can I get the monkeypox vaccine? Is it available at CVS Pharmacy® or MinuteClinic®?
The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has been shipping doses of JYNNEOS vaccine to jurisdictions as part of an enhanced national vaccination strategy since late June. This strategy is intended to help limit the spread of monkeypox in communities where transmission is highest and with populations most at risk. At this time there is no vaccine available at MinuteClinic locations or CVS Pharmacy. If you think you may be eligible for vaccination, contact a healthcare provider or your local health department.

Who should get vaccinated?
CDC recommends vaccination for people who have been in close contact with people who have monkeypox. Currently, this outbreak is largely affecting gay, bisexual, or other men who have sex with men. People who may be eligible for vaccination include:

- People who have been identified by public health officials as a contact of someone with monkeypox
- People who may have been exposed to monkeypox, such as:
  - People who are aware that one of their sexual partners in the past 2 weeks has been diagnosed with monkeypox
  - People who had multiple sexual partners in the past 2 weeks in an area with known monkeypox cases

Talk to your health care provider if you think you have been exposed to monkeypox or are at high risk for exposure.

How do I know if I am eligible for a vaccine?
If you think you may be eligible for vaccination, contact a healthcare provider or your local health department. They can help you determine if you should get vaccinated.

Will Aetna cover monkeypox testing and vaccination?
Yes, testing and vaccines for monkeypox are covered. If you think you may be eligible for vaccination, contact a healthcare provider or your local health department.
External FAQ

Monkeypox

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