

Monkeypox Facts

About monkeypox

Monkeypox is a viral disease. It is usually a mild illness, and symptoms normally resolve within a few weeks. Although rare, severe cases and death can occur. People at higher risk of complications include immunocompromised individuals, pregnant women and children under 12 years of age.

Symptoms of monkeypox

Symptoms usually develop 5 to 21 days after being exposed to monkeypox. Symptoms typically last 14 to 28 days. Before this outbreak, general symptoms usually appeared before skin rashes.

General symptoms may include:



Skin symptoms include a rash which:

- ③ Usually develops within 1 to 3 days (sometimes longer) after the fever starts
- ③ May start on the face or extremities
- ③ Can affect other parts of the body, such as the hands, feet, and genitals, and in places where it might not be visible, such as inside the mouth
- ③ Changes appearances before finally forming scabs which later fall off

In the current outbreak, many cases are presenting differently. Some people may initially have only oral, genital or perianal lesions. They may have symptoms of proctitis (rectum pain or discharge). The general symptoms could happen before or after lesions develop. Some people may develop a more generalized rash. Information will be updated, as new evidence becomes available.

How monkeypox spreads

Monkeypox can spread from person-to-person through close contact with an infected person's skin (including lesions and scabs), bodily fluids (including saliva), and mucosal surfaces (including eyes, nose, and mouth). Monkeypox can also spread through direct contact with contaminated objects or shared personal items. For example, clothing, linens, bedding, towels, sex toys, toothbrushes, and utensils.



Monkeypox Facts

Close contact with someone who has the virus increases the risk of transmission. For example:

- ③ During sexual contact (including oral and non-penetrative sexual contact)
- ③ When providing care
- ③ When living in the same household

It's possible that respiratory droplets from coughing or sneezing may spread the monkeypox virus, but the risk is not fully understood at this time.

An infected pregnant person may also pass on the virus to their developing fetus through the placenta, which can lead to congenital monkeypox.

Anyone can get or transmit monkeypox

Anyone can get infected and spread monkeypox if they come into close contact with someone who has the virus, regardless of sex, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, and race. Understanding of the virus is still evolving, and more information will be provided as it becomes available.

While most cases reported in Canada in this outbreak are among gay and bisexual men, monkeypox is not exclusive to any group or setting. When it comes to talking about any infectious disease, stigmatization can lead to a misunderstanding of risks and negative health outcomes.

Preventing the spread of monkeypox

Having multiple sexual partners may increase your overall risk of being exposed to someone with monkeypox. Consider limiting your number of sexual partners to reduce your chance of getting monkeypox.

Reduce your risk of getting or spreading monkeypox by following public health measures:



Stay home when sick



Cover coughs and sneezes (for example, by using the bend of your arm or a tissue or by wearing a mask)



Clean your hands regularly



Clean and disinfect high touch surfaces and objects

What you can do if you have or think you have monkeypox

- ③ If you have symptoms of monkeypox, contact a healthcare provider for advice.
- ③ If you're diagnosed with monkeypox, isolate from others and consult the resources of your local public health services.
 - › Remain in isolation until you're no longer contagious. This usually occurs when the rash has healed and all scabs have fallen off. Until your sores resolve, you're still able to infect those around you.
 - › Avoid contact with people at higher risk of complications. For example, children under 12, immunocompromised individuals, and pregnant women.
 - › Avoid close physical contact including sexual contact with other people.
 - › Cover sores with clothing or bandages.
 - › Wear a well-fitting medical mask when around others. For example, in shared spaces when receiving care.

Monkeypox Facts

- › Avoid sharing clothing, linens, bedding, towels, sex toys, toothbrushes, utensils, and any other items that may be contaminated.
- › Avoid contact with pets and other animals.
- › Maintain adequate hand and environmental hygiene.
- › Do not donate blood or any other bodily fluids (including sperm) or tissue.

What you can do if you've been exposed to monkeypox

If you've been exposed to someone with monkeypox, consult the resources of your local public health services. Your local public health authority may also notify you if you've been exposed to someone with monkeypox. They will provide you with instructions on how to reduce the risk of further spread, which could vary depending on your exposure risk level. Unless you have been instructed otherwise, you can continue routine daily activities, while taking some precautions:

- ③ Continue to practice hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette during your self-monitoring period.
- ③ Self-monitor for symptoms of monkeypox for 21 days after you've been exposed.
- ③ Avoid contact with people at higher risk of complications. For example, children under 12, immunocompromised individuals, and pregnant women.
- ③ Avoid sexual contact with other people.
- ③ Avoid taking medications that are known to lower fever, as they may mask an early symptom of monkeypox. For example, acetaminophen, ibuprofen, and acetylsalicylic acid.

Managing monkeypox

The vaccine Imvamune® is authorized by Health Canada for immunization against monkeypox, and other related poxvirus infections and diseases in adults 18 and older who are at higher risk of exposure. The National Advisory Committee on Immunization recommends that a single dose of Imvamune may be offered to individuals with high-risk exposures of a suspected or confirmed case of monkeypox, or within a setting where transmission is happening, ideally within 4 days of exposure. Health Canada also authorized TPOXX (Tecovirimat) for the treatment of smallpox. The use of TPOXX by health care practitioners to treat monkeypox would be considered off-label use. Contact a healthcare provider or your local public health authority to learn more.

There are other resources available to you including local crisis centres, the Canada Suicide Prevention Service (1-833-456-4566), 1 866 APPELLE (Quebec residents), the online [Wellness Together Canada portal](#), and local community organizations. Everyone's situation is different, so choose wellness strategies that work best for you.

For more information on monkeypox:
canada.ca/monkeypox