




Monkeypox Fact Sheet / FAQs

What is monkeypox? Monkeypox is a contagious viral disease that can be spread between people. It is caused by the monkeypox virus, which is related to the smallpox virus but causes a milder disease.


Is monkeypox a new disease? No, monkeypox was first discovered in the late 1950s and the first human case was diagnosed in 1970 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It has been around for several decades but was rarely seen in the United States until this year.



What's the big deal? Is it deadly? In July 2022, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the monkeypox outbreak a global health emergency due to the rapid and widespread of the disease. As of early September, very few deaths have been reported – among more than 56,000 cases, 18 deaths have been reported globally, with 1 death in the US.

What are the signs and symptoms of monkeypox? Monkeypox infection can cause a flu-like illness (fever, chills, headache, sore throat, swollen lymph nodes/glands, muscle aches, fatigue). There is usually a rash that develops and can look like pimples or fluid-filled blisters on various parts of the body, including inside the mouth, around the anus, and genital areas. Some people may only have a few of these symptoms, but most people develop a rash.

How does monkeypox spread? Monkeypox primarily spreads through direct, intimate, skin-to-skin contact (during sex, hugging, kissing, cuddling, and massaging) with a person who has a monkeypox infection. Monkeypox can also spread through prolonged face-to-face contact with someone with monkeypox, or by touching objects, clothing, bedding, towels, and surfaces that have been used by someone with monkeypox, but these routes of transmission are rare.



Why are we seeing it in the LGBTQI+ community? Is it sexually transmitted? Monkeypox is not a traditional sexually transmitted infection, but it can be spread through prolonged, intimate physical contact during sex. It is thought that the highly interconnected sexual networks within the men who have sex with men (MSM) community have allowed the monkeypox virus to spread easily. However, anyone can get monkeypox.

Should I be worried about taking MARTA / public transit, using public restrooms, and sharing equipment at the gym? As mentioned above, monkeypox is rarely spread through contaminated objects. Everyone should continue to practice frequent hand washing and good hand hygiene and consider wearing masks in public, but there is no need to avoid usual activities.

How long is a person with monkeypox contagious? A person infected with monkeypox is contagious from the time that symptoms start and until the rash has completely healed (all scabs have fallen off with a fresh layer of skin underneath). This usually takes 2-4 weeks.

