



# MONKEYPOX

What it is and what you can do.

**On August 4, 2022, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services declared a public health emergency in response to the monkeypox outbreak. Here is some information regarding this ongoing outbreak.**

## What is it?

Monkeypox is a virus related to the variola virus (the cause of smallpox), though clinically less severe. Monkeypox was first discovered in 1970 and is zoonotic, meaning it was transferred to humans from animals.

## What are the risks?

While anyone can get Monkeypox, **men who have sex with men (MSM) are at a higher risk of getting the disease.** While the risk of human monkeypox transmission is low, the public is strongly encouraged to stay alert for any symptoms of the illness and to seek medical care at once. A person with monkeypox can spread it to others from the time symptoms start until the rash has fully healed and a fresh layer of skin has formed. Monkeypox can spread to anyone through **close, personal, often skin-to-skin contact.** This includes **intimate contact, prolonged face-to-face contact, and touching objects, fabrics, and surfaces that have been used by someone with monkeypox.** While close physical contact is a well-known risk factor for transmission, it is unclear at this time if monkeypox can be transmitted specifically through sexual transmission routes.

## What are the symptoms?

Symptoms often include:

- **Rash around genitals, mouth, face, and hands**
- **Fever**
- **Swollen lymph nodes**
- **Exhaustion**
- **Muscle pain**
- **Headache**

Symptoms typically appear 6-13 days after exposure, and lesions appear within 1-3 days of developing a fever. A person with monkeypox can spread it to others from the time symptoms start until the rash has fully healed and a fresh layer of skin has formed.

## What about vaccinations?

Vaccines are recommended for those exposed to monkeypox, The U.S. government has two stockpiled vaccines—JYNNEOS and ACAM2000—that can prevent monkeypox in people who are exposed to the virus. The preferred vaccine to protect against monkeypox is JYNNEOS, which is a two-dose vaccine. It takes 14 days after getting the second dose of JYNNEOS for its immune protection to reach its maximum. See below for more information regarding getting the vaccine in D.C., Maryland, and Virginia.

## FDA AND CDC RESPONSE TO MONKEYPOX

**M**onkeypox is a rare disease that is caused by infection with monkeypox virus. This virus can spread to anyone through close, personal, often skin-to-skin contact. The FDA and CDC are providing a multipronged response to monkeypox in the United States.

*“The FDA has been closely tracking reports of monkeypox transmissions in the United States with our federal public health partners and coordinating preparedness efforts accordingly. We understand that while we are still living with COVID-19, an emerging disease may leave people feeling concerned and uncertain, but it’s important to note that we already have medical products in place, specifically an FDA-approved vaccine for the prevention of monkeypox disease and an FDA-cleared diagnostic test. The FDA is using the full breadth of its authorities to make additional diagnostics and treatments available. We will continue to collaborate with our partners across all sectors to expand accessibility to countermeasures and bolster the tools in our arsenal as appropriate.” - Robert M. Califf, M.D., FDA Commissioner*

The CDC, in partnership with FDA, has made it easier for healthcare providers to provide treatment to patients with monkeypox under the expanded access investigational new drug (EA-IND). CDC is carefully monitoring existing and emerging cases of monkeypox in the United States, while the FDA is working with commercial laboratories and manufacturers to make monkeypox tests more readily available to consumers who need them.

Many, but not all, of the recorded incidents have included gay and bisexual males, as well as transgender and non-binary persons. Given this, the FDA and CDC are committed to protecting the LGBTQ+ community against stigma, fraudulent products, and false product claims related to emerging infectious disease threats. The FDA is presently working to stop the spread of monkeypox in the LGBTQ+ community by doing extensive outreach to stakeholders, members of the LGBTQ+ local health departments, and partners to understand the epidemiology of the epidemic and to learn about the people most impacted. The FDA has taken considerable measures to address disinformation about FDA-regulated goods that is being spread online, in the news, and by high-profile public officials, celebrities, and other media sources. We will continue to explore for ways to counteract disinformation and emphasize the danger for significant harm. As we learned during the HIV pandemic, portraying it as a "gay" sickness is deceptive and undermines our ability to effectively combat the spread.

Likewise, the CDC is concentrating on finding and implementing specific strategies, such as collaborating with LGBTQ+ partners, to directly engage this population across racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and geographic lines. By conducting community listening sessions and working very closely with HIV, sexual health, and LGBTQ+ advocacy organizations, the CDC is working to create messaging that is sex positive and not stigmatizing. In addition to this targeted messaging, the CDC and FDA has developed websites dedicated to providing important information about the symptoms and behaviors that can contribute to the transmission of monkeypox as well as ongoing regulatory activities and answers to frequently asked questions.

## WHAT IS THE RISK?

**W**hile anyone can get Monkeypox, men who have sex with men (MSM) are at a higher risk of getting the disease. Given that the virus is being identified in these communities, learning about monkeypox will help ensure that as few people as possible are affected and that the outbreak can be stopped. While the risk of human monkeypox transmission is still low, the public is strongly encouraged to stay alert for any symptoms of the illness and to seek medical care at once. A person with monkeypox can spread it to others from the time symptoms start until the rash has fully healed and a fresh layer of skin has formed.

## HOW DO I PROTECT MYSELF?

**R**aising awareness of risk factors and educating yourself about the measures one can take to reduce exposure to the virus is the main prevention strategy for monkeypox. Monkeypox can [spread](#) to anyone through close, personal, often skin-to-skin contact.

- 1) Avoid close, skin-to-skin contact with people who have a rash that looks like monkeypox.
  - Do not touch the rash or scabs of a person with monkeypox.
  - Do not kiss, hug, cuddle or have sex with someone with monkeypox.

- 2) Avoid contact with objects 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.
- 3) Wash your hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, especially before eating or touching your face and after you use the bathroom.
- 4) Talk with your partner about any [monkeypox symptoms](#)

## VACCINATION: WHAT IS IT AND WHERE CAN I GO TO GET IT?

**V**[accination](#) is a crucial tool in preventing the spread of monkeypox. [JYNNEOS](#), the only vaccine approved for the prevention of monkeypox in the United States, was approved by the FDA in 2019 for the prevention of smallpox and monkeypox in adults 18 years of age and older determined to be at considerable risk of infection.

*“In response to the recently declared public health emergency on monkeypox, CBER issued an emergency use authorization (EUA) for the JYNNEOS vaccine to allow healthcare providers to use the vaccine by intradermal injection for individuals 18 years of age and older who are determined to be at high risk for monkeypox infection. The authorization will help increase the total number of doses available for use by up to five-fold. This action is critically important to help address the current outbreak, which has reached close to 9,000 cases in the U.S.” - Peter Marks, MD, PhD. Director, CBER*

1. Washington, DC: D.C. residents who meet the criteria have a few options. They can register in advance for [vaccine appointments](#) and await an invitation from the city to make an appointment.
2. Maryland: The Maryland Health Department has distributed the most doses to jurisdictions that report the highest incidence of known monkeypox cases and exposures. Individuals who believe they are eligible for vaccination should contact their [local health department](#).
  - Montgomery County asks residents who are interested in receiving a monkeypox vaccine and those who believe they were exposed to monkeypox in the previous two weeks to complete a [preregistration survey](#).
  - In Prince George’s County, [vaccine appointments](#) filled up quickly, but officials said as more doses become available, slots will be added.
3. Virginia: The Virginia Department of Health says local health departments are reaching out to people with known exposure or elevated risk of developing monkeypox to prioritize appointments for those most vulnerable to infection. A [locator tool](#) on the VDH website will supply the location and contact information for your local health district office.
4. *\*Those of you that are outside of the DMV, please contact your local health department for information on how to get the vaccine in your area.*

## RESOURCES

[FDA Monkeypox Response | FDA](#)

[FACT SHEET: Biden-Harris Administration’s Monkeypox Outbreak Response | FDA](#)

[HHS Secretary Becerra Declares Public Health Emergency | HHS](#)

[Overview of Monkeypox | CDC](#)

[2022 U.S. Monkeypox Outbreak | Monkeypox | Poxvirus | CDC](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions | Monkeypox | Poxvirus | CDC](#)

[Social Gatherings, Safer Sex, and Monkeypox | CDC](#)

[Summer 2022 Health Tips for Gay and Bi Men | CDC](#)

[Reducing Stigma in Monkeypox Communication and Community Engagement | CDC](#)

[5 Things Sexually Active People Need to Know About Monkeypox \(video\)](#)

[Monkeypox: public health advice for gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men | WHO](#)

Please note this is the most up-to-date information available. Information is rapidly changing; we will keep you up to date on any substantive changes.