

MONKEYPOX

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW



WHAT IS MONKEYPOX?

Monkeypox is a disease caused by infection of the monkeypox virus. It is in the same family as the virus that causes smallpox. Monkeypox symptoms are usually milder than smallpox and the virus is rarely fatal. The name “monkeypox” comes from the idea that African rodents and non-human primates (monkeys) may harbor the virus.



HOW DOES IT SPREAD?

Monkeypox can spread to anyone through close, personal, often skin-to-skin contact including:

- Direct contact with monkeypox rash, sores or scabs
- Contact with objects, fabrics (clothing, bedding, or towels), and surfaces that have been used by someone with monkeypox
- Respiratory secretions

This direct contact can happen during intimate contact, including:

- Oral, anal, and vaginal sex
- Hugging, massage, and kissing
- Prolonged face-to-face contact
- Touching fabrics and objects during sex that were used by a person with monkeypox, such as bedding, towels, fetish gear, and sex toys

The virus can also spread to a fetus from the infected person’s placenta. Additionally, it is possible to get monkeypox by being scratched or bitten by an infected animal or by eating meat or using products from an infected animal.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

People with monkeypox develop a rash that is often located on or near the genitals or anus. It is sometimes located on other areas such as the hands, feet, chest, face, or mouth.

Other possible symptoms include:

- Fever
- Chills
- Swollen lymph nodes
- Exhaustion
- Muscle and back pain
- Headache
- Respiratory symptoms (sore throat, nasal congestion, or cough)

Some people develop flu-like symptoms before the rash, but others experience a rash before other symptoms or only a rash.



HOW LONG DO SYMPTOMS LAST?

Symptoms usually start within 3 weeks of exposure. If you are experiencing flu-like symptoms, the rash will usually develop 1-4 days later. Symptom progression may be altered in immunocompromised people. There is little information on infections that have happened in transplant recipients.

HOW LONG IS A PERSON CONTAGIOUS?

The virus can spread from the time symptoms start until the rash has healed, all scabs have fallen off, and a fresh layer of skin has formed. The illness typically lasts 2-4 weeks but infection duration can vary for immunocompromised individuals like transplant recipients.

AM I AT HIGHER RISK AS A TRANSPLANT CANDIDATE?

Transplant candidates and recipients have not been identified as a risk group to contract monkeypox. However, they are immunocompromised, and therefore at increased risk for more severe disease if they contract monkeypox.



WHAT DOES IMMUNOCOMPROMISED MEAN?

A person is considered immunocompromised when their immune system can't readily recognize foreign cells including bacteria or viruses. Many different conditions and treatments can cause a person to be immunocompromised or have a weakened immune system. People who have received an organ transplant and many people who are waiting for a transplant are considered immunocompromised.

WHAT TREATMENTS ARE AVAILABLE FOR THOSE WHO ARE IMMUNOCOMPROMISED?



Antivirals, such as tecovirimat (TPOXX), may be recommended for people who have severe disease or are at risk for severe disease, such as solid organ transplant candidates and recipients. In animal studies, tecovirimat is shown to reduce the risk of fatality from viruses like monkeypox (orthopoxviruses) when given early in the disease course. In humans, there is limited data on tecovirimat's efficacy.

WHAT VACCINES ARE AVAILABLE?

The current CDC vaccination guidance can be found [here](#). This information is updated regularly.

There are no national regulations requiring vaccination prior to donation. The decision to vaccinate is a clinical discussion for potential donors to have with their providers. Providers should consider the risks of undetected infection to the donor as well as the risks of potential transmission to the recipient.



HOW ARE ORGANS TESTED?

Donors undergo extensive examination, evaluation of medical and social history, and laboratory screening prior to donation. The risk of an undetected infection is incredibly low, with 0.2% of transplants resulting in a transmission of infection or malignancy. However, it is not possible to reduce all risks. There are tests available for monkeypox, and the CDC recommends testing based on specific medical/social risk factors and clinical presentation.

HOW IS MONKEYPOX PREVENTED?

- 1 Avoid close, skin to skin contact with people who have a rash that looks like monkeypox
- 2 Avoid contact with a person or their bodily fluids with known or suspected monkeypox
- 3 Avoid contact with objects and materials that a person with monkeypox has used
- 4 Wash your hands often
- 5 If visiting Central and West Africa, avoid contact with animals that can spread the virus (rodents, primates, sick or dead animals)

LOOKING FOR MORE?

You can find more resources and helpful information on the CDC website.

- [Preventing spread to others](#)
- [How to protect yourself](#)
- [What to do if you are sick](#)
- [Isolation and infection control](#)