

# Monkeypox Fact Sheet

Monkeypox is a virus that causes fever, headache, swollen lymph nodes and tiredness, followed by a rash and blisters on the skin. It is usually spread by very close contact with someone who has the virus.

*Anyone can get monkeypox. However, during this outbreak, gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men have been impacted the most.*

## Symptoms & Diagnosis

Symptoms usually start within 6 to 13 days after being exposed to monkeypox, but can also start anywhere from 5 to 21 days after exposure.

Symptoms include:

- Fever
- Headache
- Muscle aches
- Backache
- Swollen lymph nodes
- Chills
- Feeling extremely tired
- Cough or sore throat (sometimes)
- Runny nose
- Rash with blisters that can appear 1 to 3 days after fever, but in some cases, can appear before fever or other symptoms. The rash usually begins as flat red spots (that can look like pimples or heat rash), which turn into blisters and then form a crust. In some cases, the rash appears around the mouth, genital or anorectal (bum) areas.

Monkeypox is diagnosed by a healthcare provider, based on symptoms and a laboratory test.

## Transmission

Monkeypox typically spreads from a person with the virus to others through:

- Prolonged close contact with respiratory droplets from breathing, talking, coughing or sneezing
- Skin-to-skin contact with lesions, blisters, rashes
- Contact with objects, fabrics and surfaces used by someone who has the virus

The virus enters the body through breaks in the skin or through the eyes and mouth.

Someone with Monkeypox can usually pass on the virus when they develop a skin rash or blisters, but it may also spread when they have early symptoms including fever and headache.

## Prevention

- Consider limiting the number of people you have close skin-to-skin contact with.
- Avoid touching blisters or rashes on another person.
- Talk to sexual partners about sexual health and use barriers such as gloves and condoms.
- Avoid sharing objects that come into contact with another person's skin or body fluids such as toothbrushes, sex toys and drug use supplies.
- Avoid prolonged close face-to-face contact with others, especially indoors.
- Wear a mask in indoor public spaces, when possible.
- Clean and disinfect frequently-touched surfaces (such as door handles, countertops and phones) and fabrics (such as clothing and bedding). Standard household cleaners/disinfectants/detergents can be used to kill the virus on surfaces.
- Avoid touching bedding and laundry that has been in contact with someone who has monkeypox.
- Use personal protective equipment (PPE) when caring for someone who has the virus, including disposable gloves and mask.
- Stay home if you are sick, and encourage others to do the same.
- Clean your hands with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Get vaccinated, if [eligible](#).

## Vaccination

A vaccine is approved in Canada for protection against monkeypox. The vaccine can be used for protection against monkeypox before getting exposed to the virus (pre-exposure prophylaxis) or after being exposed (post-exposure prophylaxis) for eligible groups. The vaccine contains modified virus and cannot make you sick. Find out more about the vaccine on the City of Toronto [website](#).

## If you think you have Monkeypox

Isolate right away and contact a health care provider. Avoid contact with animals, including household pets.

You can get tested for monkeypox at a healthcare provider's office, local walk-in clinic or [sexual health clinics](#). Call in advance to make sure that monkeypox testing is available. Please do not go to an emergency department for testing unless you require emergency care.

Toronto Public Health will contact and give guidance to people who test positive for monkeypox as well as known close contacts of someone who tests positive.

People who have been in contact with a person who has monkeypox should monitor themselves for symptoms for 21 days. If no symptoms appear you can continue with normal activities. If symptoms develop, you should isolate and contact a healthcare provider.

Most people recover from monkeypox on their own within 2 to 4 weeks and do not need any specific treatment. However, some people can get seriously sick. Contact a health care provider if you have any concerns about your symptoms.

**For more information:** talk to a healthcare provider or visit [toronto.ca/Monkeypox](https://toronto.ca/Monkeypox).