



Needham Public Health Monkeypox FAQ

Q: What is Monkeypox?

Monkeypox is a rare disease caused by infection with the monkeypox virus. Monkeypox virus is part of the same family of viruses as variola virus, the virus that causes smallpox. Monkeypox symptoms are similar to smallpox symptoms, but milder, and monkeypox is rarely fatal. Monkeypox is not related to chickenpox.

Q: How does Monkeypox spread?

Monkeypox can spread to anyone through close, personal, often skin-to-skin contact, including: direct contact with monkeypox rash, scabs, or body fluids from a person with monkeypox, touching objects, fabrics (clothing, bedding, or towels), and surfaces that have been used by someone with monkeypox, and contact with respiratory secretions.

Such contact can include hugging, massaging, kissing, sex, and prolonged face to face contact of at least 3 hrs. or more. 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. The illness typically lasts 2-4 weeks.

Q: Who is at risk of contracting monkeypox?

HIGH RISK (examples):

Intimate skin on skin contact (even without sexual activity), Includes kissing, hugging, prolonged face-to-face contact, Sharing bedding, clothes or towels

INTERMEDIATE RISK (examples):

Spending hours (3+) in the same room with a case, neither person wearing masks

LOW RISK (examples):

Sitting in the same room as a case for less than 3 hours

Q: What are the signs and symptoms of Monkeypox?

Symptoms of monkeypox can include:

- Fever
- Headache
- Muscle aches and backache
- Swollen lymph nodes
- Chills
- Exhaustion
- Respiratory symptoms (e.g. sore throat, nasal congestion, or cough)
- A rash that may be located on or near the genitals (penis, testicles, labia, and vagina) or anus (butthole) but could also be on other areas like the hands, feet, chest, face, or mouth.
 - The rash will go through several stages, including scabs, before healing.
 - The rash can look like pimples or blisters and may be painful or itchy.



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You may experience all or only a few symptoms. Sometimes, people get a rash first, followed by other symptoms. Others only experience a rash. Most people with monkeypox will get a rash. Some people have developed a rash before (or without) other symptoms.

Monkeypox symptoms usually start within 3 weeks of exposure to the virus. If someone has flu-like symptoms, they will usually develop a rash 1-4 days later.

Q: How can I protect myself?

People can protect themselves by taking simple steps, which are especially important for those who may be at higher risk for severe disease, including people with weakened immune systems:

- Ask your sexual partners whether they have a rash or other symptoms consistent with monkeypox.
- Avoid skin-to-skin contact with someone who has a rash or other monkeypox-related symptoms. If you are exposed or experience symptoms, make sure to reach out to a health care provider.
- Avoid contact with objects and materials that a person with monkeypox has used, such as utensils or cups, and bedding or clothing of a person with monkeypox.

Q: What do I do if I am exposed to someone with monkeypox?

Contact your healthcare provider to discuss options for vaccination. Monitor your temperature twice daily for 21 days following exposure. Date of exposure is day zero.

Q: What do I do if I have symptoms?

Isolate yourself from anyone else in your household. Contact your primary care provider about your symptoms and potential treatment options.

Q: Who is eligible for vaccination?

Vaccination will be available to individuals who live or work in Massachusetts and meet the CDC's current eligibility criteria, prioritizing those who are most at risk of exposure to an individual with monkeypox. This includes:

- Known contacts identified by public health via case investigation, contact tracing, and risk exposure assessments (this may include sexual partners, household contacts, and healthcare workers); as well as
- Presumed contacts who meet the following criteria:
 - Know that a sexual partner in the past 14 days was diagnosed with monkeypox
 - Had multiple sexual partners in the past 14 days in a jurisdiction with known monkeypox

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health will expand eligibility if and when more doses are received from the CDC.

Q: Where can I get vaccinated if I am referred by my healthcare provider?

Massachusetts's has several places that is providing the vaccine. Appointments are required. For lists of places and contact information please visit <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/monkeypox-vaccination>

For any further questions call Needham Public Health at 781-455-7940 or email publichealthnursing@needhamma.gov

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