

Important Information About Monkeypox

You have tested positive for monkeypox. You may be contacted by public health officials to determine if any of your close contacts will need to be tested or vaccinated. You should inform people who live with you or with whom you had close contact to contact the local health department for further instructions.

Monkeypox is an infection caused by the monkeypox virus. Monkeypox infection is usually mild. More than 99 percent of people who get this infection can recover at home without treatment. However, people with weakened immune systems, children under eight years of age, people with a history of severe eczema, and people who are pregnant or breastfeeding may be more likely to get seriously ill or die.

Treatment:

Most patients with monkeypox recover on their own. For patients who are at high risk for severe disease or death, a medication that was developed for the treatment of smallpox may be available. This medication is called tecovirimat, and it is often sold under the brand name TPOXX. Your doctor will refer you to an infectious disease specialist if you are a good candidate for this investigational treatment.

A vaccine against monkeypox is available, but it is most effective if you have received it and have mounted an appropriate immune response before the infection occurs. People who meet the criteria for a high-risk exposure to someone with monkeypox can be vaccinated to prevent infection. The vaccine is currently only available from the CDC through local health departments. Visit <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/health/health-topics/monkeypox.page#vax> for more information on eligibility and making an appointment.

Home Isolation:

People with monkeypox should isolate. This means you should stay away from others to prevent the spread of this infection. Isolation should continue until the rash has fully resolved, the scabs have fallen off, and a fresh layer of intact skin has formed. The illness can last up to 28 days.

Isolate From Others:

- Do not leave the home except as needed for emergencies or medical care.
- Isolate from other household members when possible. Limit use of shared spaces, items, and food.
- Isolate from household pets when possible. Friends or family members should care for healthy animals until the owner has fully recovered.
- Wear a well-fitting mask when around others at home.
- Avoid close contact with others outside the home. Do not have visitors unless there is an essential need.
- Do not engage in sexual activity that involves direct physical contact.
- If you are a health care worker, you should inform Employee Health Services (EHS) about your diagnosis and should not report to work until you are cleared by EHS.

Additional Recommendations:

People with monkeypox should follow the recommendations below until cleared by state or local public health officials:

Prevent the Spread of Infection Through Objects:

- Do not share household items. This includes bed linens, clothing, towels, washcloths, drinking glasses, and eating utensils. These items can spread the infection.
- Routinely clean and disinfect commonly touched surfaces and items using a disinfectant. This includes surfaces such as counters and light switches.
- If possible, use a separate bathroom if there are others who live in the same household.
- If there is not a separate bathroom in the home, clean and disinfect surfaces such as counters, toilet seats, and faucets using a disinfectant. Cleaning should take place after activities such as showering, using the toilet, or changing bandages that cover the rash. Consider using disposable gloves while cleaning if a rash is present on the hands.

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- Do not share dishes and other eating utensils. Wash soiled dishes and eating utensils in a dishwasher or by hand with warm water and soap. It is not necessary for the infected person to use separate utensils if properly washed.
- Place coversheets, waterproof mattress covers, blankets, or tarps over mattresses and furniture pieces that have fabric and cannot be washed. Steam-cleaning furniture may be appropriate if there is concern about contamination.
- Avoid use of contact lenses to prevent infection of the eye.
- Avoid shaving rash-covered areas of the body, as this can lead to spread of the virus.

Use Protective Items, Such as Masks and Gloves:

- Practice proper hand hygiene. This includes the use of an alcohol-based hand rub or washing hands with soap and water. Household contacts should practice hand hygiene as well. This is especially important after touching any item or surface that may have had contact with the rash.
- Cover skin rashes by wearing long sleeves or long pants. Gloves may be used for covering rash on the hands when not in isolation, such as when receiving medical care.
- When possible, the person with monkeypox should change their own bandages and handle contaminated linens. They should wear disposable gloves and wash their hands immediately after removing the gloves.
- As a last resort, if assistance is needed with these activities, a household member should limit their contact and wear protective items. This includes, at a minimum, disposable medical gloves, and a well-fitting mask, such as a KN-95 or N95 respirator. Any clothing that comes in contact with the rash during dressing changes should be immediately laundered. Gloves should be disposed of after use, followed by handwashing.

For more information about monkeypox, please go to the following websites:

<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/health/health-topics/monkeypox.page>

<https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/index.html>