



MONKEYPOX

BY KRISTIN PRELIPP

**Communications Manager and Public Information
Officer for the Orange County Health Department**



**ORANGE COUNTY
HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

WHAT IS MONKEYPOX?

It is a disease caused by the Monkeypox virus. It is normally found in central and west Africa. Starting in May 2022 it began spreading in Europe. Recently the first cases were reported in North Carolina. **Anyone can be infected by monkeypox regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity or any other identity.**

Infections with the type of monkeypox virus identified in this outbreak—the West African type—are rarely fatal. **Over 99% of people who get this form of the disease are likely to survive.** The people most at risk of serious illness or death are:

- people with weakened immune systems
- children under 8 years of age
- people with a history of eczema
- people who are pregnant or breastfeeding



HOW DOES MONKEYPOX SPREAD?

MONKEYPOX SPREADS BY:



Large respiratory droplets via prolonged face-to-face contact



Contact with bodily fluids



Contact with contaminated objects or surfaces (like clothing and bedding)

The virus can spread from person-to-person through:

- direct contact with the infectious rash, scabs, or body fluids
- respiratory secretions during prolonged, face-to-face contact, or during intimate physical contact, such as kissing, cuddling, or sex
- touching items (such as clothing or linens) that previously touched the infectious rash or body fluids
- pregnant people with monkeypox can spread the virus to their fetus through the placenta

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF MONKEYPOX?



Monkeypox symptoms usually start within three weeks of exposure to the virus, and may include:

- Fever
- Chills
- Headache
- Muscle aches
- Exhaustion
- Swollen lymph nodes
- Clear or pus-filled bumps

Some people develop only a single lesion that could be mistaken for a symptom of sexually transmitted disease. Others develop the rash before the onset of other symptoms, while others may experience only a rash.

IS MONKEYPOX AN STI?

Monkeypox is not considered a sexually transmitted infection (STI).

Although cases have been clustered among gay and bisexual men who have sex with men, monkeypox can infect anybody, regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation.

If you have a new or unexplained rash or other symptoms:

- Avoid sex or being intimate with anyone until you have been checked out by a healthcare provider.
- If you don't have a provider or health insurance, visit a public health clinic near you. When you see a healthcare provider, wear a mask, and remind them that this virus is circulating in the area.

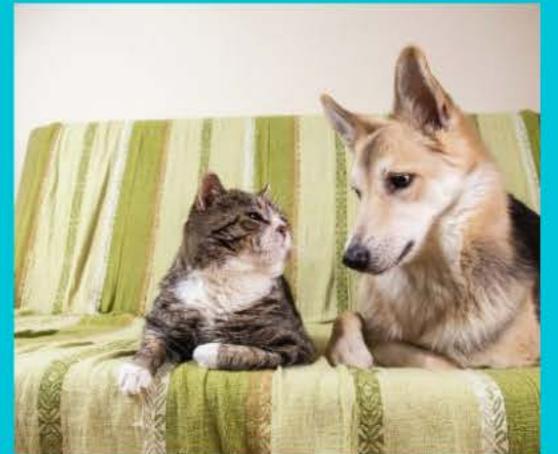
WHAT IF I HAVE MONKEYPOX?

If you or your partner have monkeypox:

- Follow the treatment and prevention recommendations of your healthcare provider.
- Avoid sex or being intimate with anyone until the rash has healed, the scabs have fallen off and you have a fresh layer of skin. The illness usually lasts 2-4 weeks.

People with monkeypox should avoid contact with animals, including pets.

- It is possible that people who are infected can spread Monkeypox virus to animals through close contact, including petting, cuddling, hugging, kissing, licking, sharing sleeping areas, and sharing food.
- Call your veterinarian if you notice an animal appears sick within 21 days of having contact with a person who has probable or confirmed monkeypox.

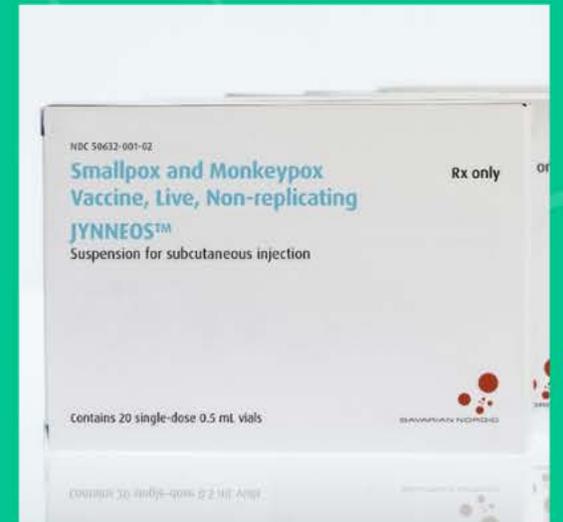


HOW DO YOU TREAT MONKEYPOX?

There are no treatments specifically for monkeypox virus infections. However, **monkeypox and smallpox viruses are genetically similar**, which means that **antiviral drugs and vaccines developed to protect against smallpox may be used to prevent and treat monkeypox virus infections.**

Antivirals, such as tecovirimat (TPOXX), may be recommended for people who are more likely to get severely ill, like patients with weakened immune systems.

Vaccines: Two orthopoxvirus vaccines are available (JYNNEOS and ACAM2000.) JYNNEOS is the vaccine currently being distributed and administered in North Carolina. It is a regular injectable vaccine. It is safe to give to pregnant people and the immunocompromised.



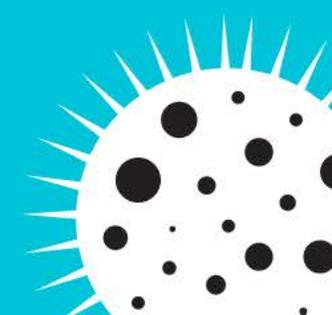


HOW DO I PREVENT MONKEYPOX?

How can a person lower their risk during sex?

Talk to your partner about any recent illness and be aware of new or unexplained rash on your body or your partner's body, including the genitals and anus. If you or your partner have recently been sick, currently feel sick, or have a new or an unexplained rash, do not have sex and see a healthcare provider.

If you or a partner has monkeypox, the best way to protect yourself and others is to avoid sex of any kind (oral, anal, vaginal) and do not kiss or touch each other's bodies while you are sick, especially any rash. Do not share things like towels, fetish gear, sex toys, and toothbrushes.



HOW DO I PREVENT MONKEYPOX?

How can a person lower the chance of getting monkeypox at places like raves, parties, clubs, and festivals?

Consider how much close, personal, skin-to-skin contact is likely to occur at the event you plan to attend. If you feel sick or have a rash, do not attend any gathering, and see a healthcare provider.

- Events where attendees are **fully clothed** and unlikely to share skin-to-skin contact are **safer**. However, attendees should be mindful of activities (like kissing) that might spread monkeypox.
- An event where there is **minimal clothing** and where there is direct, personal, often skin-to-skin contact has some **risk**. Avoid any rash you see on others and consider minimizing skin-to-skin contact.





WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I THINK I MIGHT HAVE MONKEYPOX?

Due to a very limited supply of Monkeypox vaccine, the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) distributed vaccines to seven county health departments, including neighboring Durham County, which serves as the Monkeypox vaccine hub for Orange County. If an Orange County community member has been in contact with a confirmed case of Monkeypox or are experiencing symptoms, they should contact their primary care provider or the local health department. **OCHD may be reached at (919) 245-2400.**

More information: <https://www.orangecountync.gov/2941/Monkeypox>

