

Monkeypox and Sexual Health: What all New Yorkers Should Know

What is monkeypox, and what should I know about the current outbreak in the U.S.?

Monkeypox is a rare, viral infection that does not usually cause serious illness. However, it can result in hospitalization or death. That's why health officials in New York, the U.S., and around the world are monitoring cases of monkeypox in areas that do not usually report monkeypox infections, including in New York State.

While New Yorkers should not be alarmed, everyone should stay informed about monkeypox. This means understanding the symptoms, how it spreads, and what to do if you are exposed.

What should all New Yorkers know about monkeypox?

- Anyone can get monkeypox. However, based on the current outbreak, certain populations are being affected by monkeypox more than others, including men who have sex with men (MSM).
- Based on previous outbreaks of monkeypox around the world, some groups may also be at heightened risk for severe outcomes if they contract monkeypox.
- This includes people with weakened immune systems, elderly New Yorkers, young children under 8 years of age, and pregnant people.

What are the symptoms of monkeypox?

Symptoms of monkeypox include:



- Rashes, bumps, or blisters that may appear on or around the genitals or in other areas such as your hands, feet, chest, or face. These may be similar in appearance to common sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and other common skin ailments like poison ivy.
- Flu-like symptoms, such as fever, headache, muscle aches, chills, and fatigue. These symptoms may occur before or after the rash appears, or not at all.



How does monkeypox spread?

Monkeypox is spread through close, physical contact between individuals. This includes:

- Direct contact with monkeypox sores or rashes on an individual who has monkeypox.
- Respiratory droplets or oral fluids from someone with monkeypox, particularly for those who have close contact with someone or are around them for a long period of time.
- It can also be spread through contact with objects or fabrics (e.g., clothing, bedding, towels) that have been used by someone with monkeypox.

What should I do if I was exposed or have symptoms consistent with monkeypox?

New Yorkers who experience symptoms consistent with monkeypox, such as characteristic rashes or lesions, should contact their health care provider for a risk assessment. This includes anyone who traveled to countries where monkeypox cases have been reported or has had contact with someone who has a similar rash, or who received a diagnosis of suspected or confirmed monkeypox.

How can I protect myself against monkeypox?

New Yorkers 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.
- Follow reputable sources of health information, including NYSDOH, CDC, and your local county health department.



For more information and resources about monkeypox, visit:

health.ny.gov/monkeypox