



## Talking Points: MONKEYPOX

Date/Time: July 26, 2022

**\*\*Information in this document is not for public dissemination or public posting\*\***

**New information highlighted**

### Key Messages:

1. Currently, the risk of the general public getting monkeypox in the United States is considered to be low.
2. Seek medical care immediately if you are concerned that you may have monkeypox.
3. Avoid close contact with sick people, including people with skin and/or genital rashes or lesions.

**\*\*Please emphasize that people should consult their local health department for information about implementing any of the recommended steps outlined in this document.**

## ABOUT MONKEYPOX

### 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 smallpox, but is not the same as smallpox.

### What are the symptoms of monkeypox?

Symptoms of monkeypox can include:

- Fever
- Headache
- Muscle aches and backache
- Swollen lymph nodes
- Chills
- Feeling very tired
- A rash that can look like pimples or blisters that appears on the face, inside the mouth, and on other parts of the body such as the hands, feet, chest, genitals, or anus

### **Can I go to a local laboratory such as LabCorp to get tested for monkeypox?**

Although commercial testing is available, specimens must be collected by a healthcare provider and sent to the lab. LabCorp, Quest and other labs that are doing testing will not take self-referred walk-ins for monkeypox testing.

### **What should I do if I have symptoms?**

- See a health care provider if you have a new rash or other monkeypox symptoms. Avoid close contact (including intimate contact) with others until a health care provider sees you for an exam. If you think that there is a possibility that you may have monkeypox, wear a mask and remind the health care provider that the virus is circulating. Avoid close contact, including sexual or intimate contact, with anyone until you have been seen by a health care provider. Rashes on the body should be covered with long sleeves or pants to avoid touching other people.

Avoid close contact with pets or other animals until you have seen a health care provider. If you are waiting for test results, follow the same steps. If your test is positive, stay isolated from others until your rash has healed, all scabs have fallen off, and a fresh layer of intact skin has formed.

### **Is monkeypox deadly?**

Infections caused by the strain that is currently spreading in the United States are rarely fatal. Over 99% of people who get this form of the disease are likely to survive. People with weak immune systems, a history of skin problems such as eczema, or who are pregnant or breastfeeding may be more likely to get seriously ill or die. Even though rarely fatal, monkeypox can be very painful and the rash may cause permanent scars.

## **TRANSMISSION**

### **How does monkeypox spread?**

Monkeypox can spread in different ways. It can spread from person to person through direct contact with the rash, scabs, or body fluids. It can also spread by face-to-face contact through respiratory droplets, or during close contact such as kissing, cuddling, or sex. Scabs are much less infectious than respiratory secretions. Pregnant people can spread the virus to their fetus through the placenta.

Touching items such as clothes, towels, bed linens, etc. that were in contact with the rash or body fluids can also spread the virus. Handle laundry carefully as there have been reports of variola virus (a virus from the same family as monkeypox virus) from infected fabric and bedding getting into the air. This creates an infection risk. Never shake or handle the linens roughly, as this may contaminate the air, surfaces, and others with infectious particles.

A person can also get monkeypox from infected animals, either by bites or scratches, or by eating meat or using products made from infected animals.

## **What do I do if I am diagnosed with monkeypox?**

If you are diagnosed with monkeypox, or an orthopox virus, avoid others until your symptoms have gone away and the rash has healed completely. This includes:

- Avoiding sex or being intimate with anyone until all your sores have healed and you have a fresh layer of skin formed.
- Avoiding crowds.
- Avoiding contact with animals including pets, domestic animals, and wildlife.
- Rashes on the body should be covered with long sleeves or pants to avoid touching other people.
- If rashes can't be easily covered, stay away from other people and pets as much as possible.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water. Use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Wash surfaces and materials that you have touched while you had symptoms, including bedding, towels, clothing, sex toys, and surfaces such as door handles or counter tops. Standard household cleaning and disinfecting products may be used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

## **How long is a person infected with monkeypox able to spread the virus?**

Monkeypox can spread from the time symptoms start until the rash has fully healed and a fresh layer of skin has formed. This usually takes two to four weeks.

## **Can I get monkeypox from having sex?**

Even though it is not considered a sexually transmitted infection, monkeypox can spread during intimate physical contact between people. This close contact can happen when you have sex including:

- Oral, anal, and vaginal sex
- Touching the genitals or anus of a person with monkeypox
- Hugging, massage, kissing, or talking closely
- Touching fabrics, shared surfaces, and objects, such as bedding, towels and sex toys, that were used by a person with monkeypox

Anyone, regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation can catch monkeypox if they have close contact with someone infected with the virus.

## **Am I likely to get monkeypox?**

At this time, the risk of monkeypox in the United States is thought to be low. It does not spread easily between people. From the time a person is exposed and when symptoms start is long enough to give public health officials time to start finding the people who may have had contact with an infected person. This helps break the chain of infection. In the current outbreak, data suggest that some groups may be at increased risk and should use increased caution. This includes gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men.

## **PREVENTION**

### **How can a person lower their risk of getting monkeypox during sex?**

Talk to your partner about any recent illness and be aware of new or unexplained sores or rashes 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 or sores, do not have sex and see a healthcare provider. This is always a good plan, even if monkeypox isn't in your area.

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

If you or your partner have (or think you might have) monkeypox and you decide to have sex, consider the following to reduce the chance of spreading the virus:

- Have virtual sex with no in-person contact.
- Masturbate together at a distance of at least 6 feet, without touching each other and without touching any rash or sores.
- Consider having sex with your clothes on or covering areas where rash or sores are present, reducing as much skin-to-skin contact as possible.
- Avoid kissing.
- Remember to wash your hands, fetish gear, sex toys and any fabrics (bedding, towels, clothing) after having sex
- Limit your number of partners to avoid opportunities for monkeypox to spread.

### **How can a person determine the risk of getting monkeypox at places like raves, parties, clubs and festivals?**

When thinking about attending events, 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 any rashes or sores, do not attend any gathering, and see a health care provider.

Safer gatherings include festivals, events, and concerts where people are fully clothed, and unlikely to share skin-to-skin contact. But, keep in mind that close personal contact such as kissing, can spread monkeypox.

A rave, party, or club where there is minimal clothing and where there is direct, personal, often skin-to-skin contact has some risk. Avoid any rashes or sores you see on others and consider minimizing skin-to-skin contact when possible.

Enclosed spaces, such as back rooms, saunas, or sex clubs, where there is minimal or no clothing and where intimate sexual contact occurs have a higher likelihood of spreading monkeypox.

**Limiting your number of sex partners may reduce the possibility of exposure.**

### **How can the spread of monkeypox be prevented in the home?**

Most people with monkeypox do not need to be in a hospital and can recover at home. People with monkeypox should isolate away from others in the home until the rash has fully healed, the scabs have fallen off, and a fresh layer of intact skin has formed.

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

- Do not leave the home except as required for emergencies or follow-up medical care.
- Avoid close contact with others.
- Do not engage in sexual activity that involves direct physical contact.
- Do not share potentially contaminated items, such as bed linens, clothing, towels, wash cloths, drinking glasses or eating utensils.
- Washing hands with soap and water, or using an alcohol-based hand rub should be done frequently by people infected with monkeypox and their household contacts after touching rash material, clothing, linens, or environmental surfaces that may have had contact with rash material.
- Routinely clean and disinfect commonly touched surfaces and items, such as counters or light switches, using an [EPA-registered disinfectant](#) (such as [List Q](#)) in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- Wear well-fitting source control (e.g., medical mask) when in close contact with others at home. Caregivers should wear a respirator or medical mask also when they are within 6 feet of the person who is infected with monkeypox for more than a brief encounter.
- Avoid use of contact lenses to prevent spreading the infection to the eyes.
- Avoid shaving rash-covered areas of the body as this can lead to spread of the virus.
- Bathroom usage:
  - 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, the patient should clean and disinfect surfaces such as counters, toilet seats, faucets, using an EPA-registered disinfectant (such as [List Q](#)) after using a shared space. This may include during activities like showering, using the toilet, or changing bandages that cover the rash. Consider disposable glove use while cleaning if rash is present on the hands.
- Limit contamination within household:
  - Try to avoid contaminating upholstered furniture and other porous materials that cannot be laundered by placing coversheets, waterproof mattress covers, blankets, or tarps over these surfaces.
  - Cover all skin rashes to the extent possible by wearing long sleeves or long pants. Gloves can be considered for covering rash on the hands when not in isolation such as when receiving medical care.
  - Additional precautions such as steam cleaning can be considered if there is concern about contamination.
- When possible, the person with monkeypox should change their own bandages and handle contaminated linens while wearing disposable gloves, followed by immediate handwashing after removing gloves.
  - As a last resort, if assistance is needed with these activities, a household member should avoid extensive contact and wear, at a minimum, disposable medical gloves and a well-fitting mask or respirator. Any clothing that contacts the rash during dressing changes should be immediately laundered. Gloves should be disposed of after use, followed by handwashing.

### **Do I need to do anything special with the medical waste from caring for a person with monkeypox?**

There are guidelines for properly disposing of the medical waste that comes from caring for a person with monkeypox such as dressings, bandages, or disposable gloves. See [Interim Guidance for Household Disinfection of Monkeypox Virus \[PDF – 144 KB\]](#) for detailed information.

### **Is it safe to have visitors while isolating at home?**

No. It is important to avoid contact with unaffected individuals until the rash has resolved, the scabs have fallen off, and a fresh layer of intact skin has formed. Friends, family or others without an essential need to be in the home **should not visit**.

- Isolate in a room or area separate from other household members and pets when possible.
- Limit use of spaces, items, and food that are shared with other household members.
- Do not share dishes and other eating utensils. It is not necessary for the infected person to use separate utensils if properly washed. Wash soiled dishes and eating utensils in a dishwasher or by hand with warm water and soap.

### **Do people who had close contact with a monkeypox patient have to quarantine?**

Close contacts of monkeypox cases should self-monitor for the development of symptoms for 21 days after the last exposure and should avoid close physical contact with young children, pregnant people, and those with weak immune systems until monkeypox. They do not have to quarantine at home for that time. However, if symptoms develop, they should isolate themselves and call their doctor.

### **What should I know about cleaning my house if someone is infected with monkeypox?**

The CDC provides general guidance on cleaning and disinfecting non-healthcare settings, such as homes or cars, where an individual with monkeypox spent significant time. Visit [Interim Guidance for Household Disinfection of Monkeypox Virus \[PDF – 144 KB\]](#) for more information.

### **Will condoms protect me from monkeypox?**

It is not known whether condoms prevent the transmission of monkeypox. If rashes are confined to the genitals or anus, condoms may help. Not all monkeypox rashes occur in areas that a condom can cover. The virus can also spread by respiratory droplets. Even when used, direct skin-to-skin contact with infectious rash, scabs, or body fluids not covered by a condom, and face-to-face contact can still occur. Therefore, condoms alone are probably not enough to prevent monkeypox. Condom use for prevention of monkeypox has not been studied.

## **CONGREGATE SETTINGS**

If a staff member, volunteer, or resident of a congregate living setting has monkeypox infection, it could spread within that setting. Specific details relating to the prevention of monkeypox in congregate settings can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/specific-settings/congregate.html>

## **PETS AND ANIMALS**

### **Could my pet get monkeypox?**

People with monkeypox should avoid contact with animals (specifically mammals), including pets.

- If possible, friends or family members should care for healthy animals until the owner has fully recovered.
- Keep any potentially infectious bandages, textiles (such as clothes, bedding) and other items away from pets, other domestic animals, and wildlife.
- In general, any mammal may become infected with monkeypox. It is not thought that other animals such as reptiles, fish or birds can be infected.

If you notice an animal that had contact with an infected person appears sick (such as lethargy, lack of appetite, coughing, bloating, nasal or eye secretions or crust, fever, rash) contact the owner's veterinarian, state public health veterinarian, or state animal health official.

## **TREATMENT**

### **Can monkeypox be treated?**

There are no treatments specifically for monkeypox. But, since monkeypox and smallpox are from the same virus family, certain drugs and vaccines created for smallpox may be used to treat and prevent monkeypox infections. An antiviral drug called tecovirimat (TPOXX), may be recommended for people who are more likely to get severely sick, like people with weak immune systems.

There are also two vaccines that have been stockpiled by the U.S. government that can prevent monkeypox in people who are exposed to the virus. Vaccines may be recommended for people who have had contact with someone who has monkeypox, or for health care and public health workers who may have been exposed to the virus. The vaccines are called JYNNEOS and ACAM2000.

## **VACCINATION**

### **Are there vaccines for monkeypox?**

Yes. JYNNEOS™ (also known as Imvamune or Imvanex) is licensed to prevent monkeypox and ACAM2000, originally licensed to prevent smallpox, can also be used to prevent monkeypox. CDC believes that making vaccines available now is one important strategy to contain monkeypox. CDC is working with partners to ensure there are enough doses available to vaccinate all people for whom vaccination is recommended. JYNNEOS, which has fewer side effects, is specifically licensed to prevent monkeypox, and is easier to administer, is generally preferred, but is also in much shorter supply.

The national strategy has two phases:

The first phase will use available vaccine for people who have had close contact with people known to have monkeypox, and for people who may have had high-risk exposures in venues or areas where monkeypox is actively spreading.

In the second phase, when more JYNNEOS vaccine is available, broader vaccination of persons who may be at risk for future monkeypox exposure may be considered.

### **Who can get monkeypox vaccines?**

For residents with known exposure to a person with monkeypox, the two-dose regimen for Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) continues to be available through their local health department. Anyone with a known exposure within the past 14 days should contact their health care provider or local health department

regarding testing and vaccine eligibility. Local health departments will continue to conduct contact tracing and offer the vaccine to anyone identified as a close contact.

For residents without a confirmed exposure who believe they may have been exposed or are at high risk for having been exposed to monkeypox in the past 14 days, the vaccine is now available through three community partners via appointments only.

New Jersey is expecting additional doses from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and as the State gets additional supply, the Department will continue to expand access to the vaccine.

### **If I am eligible, how can I get a vaccine?**

For these residents, information on vaccine appointments through the expanded PEP program is available through the three community partners:

- Hyacinth AIDS Foundation/Project Living Out Loud!, Jersey City: 201-706-3480
- The Prevention Resource Network, a program of the Visiting Nurse Association of Central Jersey, Asbury Park: 732-502-5100
- North Jersey Community Research Initiative (NJCRI), Newark: [973-483-3444](tel:973-483-3444), ext. 200

### **Can members of the general public receive vaccines for monkeypox?**

At this moment, monkeypox vaccines are only available to those who are at high risk of getting infected with the disease (such as lab workers, healthcare personnel, and those responding to monkeypox outbreaks, or individuals who were exposed to a person with monkeypox and for whom post-exposure prophylaxis is recommended).

**The risk of getting sick with monkeypox is very low for the general public; therefore, vaccination is not recommended for the general public at this time.**

### **How will the vaccine be distributed?**

States will be offered an equitable allotment of JYNNEOS vaccine doses based on current cases as well as the proportion of the population at risk for severe disease from monkeypox.

### **Do the vaccines prevent infection or just reduce severity of the illness?**

If given within the first four days after exposure, the vaccine may prevent illness. Given between days 4 and 14, the vaccine may still reduce the severity of illness. If given later than that, it would not be expected to have any effect. This is why when used to prevent infection following exposure, the vaccine must be given within 14 days. Vaccine is not given to people who have monkeypox to reduce their symptoms.

### **How are the vaccines given?**

JYNNEOS is given as a series of two injections, four weeks apart. Because JYNNEOS is licensed as a two-dose series and the real-world vaccine effectiveness is unknown in the context of the current outbreak, CDC continues to recommend two doses of JYNNEOS vaccine to provide maximum protection against monkeypox infection.

The ACAM2000 smallpox vaccine is not a shot like other vaccines. Your healthcare provider will make 15 pokes in the skin of your upper arm with a needle containing ACAM2000. The pokes are not deep, but will cause a drop of blood to form. This wound will heal and form a scab.



**Is there a “grace period” for receiving the second dose of JYNNEOS? Does it have to be given exactly four weeks apart?**

There may be times when a person is due for their second dose of JYNNEOS and may not be available on the day they are due. The second vaccine can be given at four weeks, plus or minus seven days from the day they are due.

**When am I considered “fully vaccinated with the JYNNEOS vaccine?”**

People are considered fully vaccinated two weeks after receiving their second dose of the JYNNEOS vaccine. Fully vaccinated people are still recommended to protect themselves against monkeypox and to isolate at home in case of symptoms.

**If I had a smallpox vaccination in the past, do I need JYNNEOS?**

Previous smallpox vaccination does provide protection, but it may not be lifelong. During the 2003 monkeypox outbreak and during the current outbreak, several people who were infected with monkeypox had previously been vaccinated against smallpox decades prior.

**What are the side effects of these vaccines?**

Possible side effects are mild fever, tiredness, swollen glands, and redness and itching at the place where the vaccine is given. Some people have a tendency to faint after receiving vaccinations. Tell your provider if you feel dizzy or have vision changes or ringing in the ears.

In certain groups of people, such as people with serious immune system problems, complications from ACAM2000 can be severe. If you have concerns about whether you should receive ACAM2000, talk to your healthcare provider. This vaccine has the potential for more side effects and adverse events than the newer vaccine, JYNNEOS.

**Who should NOT receive the JYNNEOS vaccine?**

People who have had a serious allergic reaction to a previous dose of JYNNEOS vaccine or a component in the vaccine (gentamicin, ciprofloxacin, egg protein) should speak with their health care provider to confirm it is safe for them to receive the vaccine.

**You may still be able to be vaccinated if you have some of the other conditions below, but tell your vaccination provider if you:**

- Have any severe, life-threatening allergies
- Are pregnant or think you may be pregnant
- Are breastfeeding
- Have a weakened immune system

**Is the vaccine FDA approved?**

Yes, JYNNEOS is FDA approved for protection against monkeypox in people ages 18 years and older who are at high risk for monkeypox infection.

**What if I have an allergic reaction?**

If you see signs of a severe allergic reaction (hives, swelling of the face and throat, difficulty breathing, a fast heartbeat, dizziness, or weakness), call **9-1-1** and get the person to the nearest hospital.

Serious side effects should be reported to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS). Visit <https://vaers.hhs.gov/reportevent.html> or call **1-800-822-7967**.

*NOTE: VAERS is only for reporting reactions, and VAERS staff members do not give medical advice.*

### **Where can I find more information about vaccines for monkeypox?**

You can read information about these vaccines at the links below:

- [JYNNEOS](#)
- [Medication Guide for ACAM2000](#)

### **Is monkeypox the same as smallpox, chickenpox, or shingles?**

Although these diseases can all cause rashes, they are all separate illnesses.

Monkeypox virus is closely related to the virus that causes smallpox; however, monkeypox is milder and less fatal. A feature that distinguishes infection with monkeypox from that of smallpox is the development of swollen lymph nodes which can occur on the neck, armpits, or groin area and can appear on both sides of the body or just one. Since 1980, smallpox has been declared eradicated (eliminated) thanks to widespread vaccination and disease control efforts. The last known natural case was in Somalia in 1977.

### **Do the vaccines for chickenpox and shingles help prevent monkeypox?**

No, vaccines for chickenpox and shingles do not help prevent monkeypox.

## **STATE RESPONSE**

### **What the NJ Department of Health doing to prevent further spread of monkeypox?**

The NJ Department of Health is working closely with federal, state, and local public health and health care partners to identify possible cases, begin contact tracing quickly, provide vaccine and/or antiviral treatment as needed to cases and their contacts. NJDOH is also providing guidance to health care providers to help them identify possible cases, and get a proper diagnosis.

### **For more information:**

- Visit the NJDOH website at <https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/monkeypox.shtml>
- Visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/faq.html>
- Contact your health care provider