

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Things to know about Monkeypox

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JACKSON COUNTY, MI – The virus that causes Monkeypox was identified over 60 years ago in a group of monkeys at a research lab. The first human case was reported in 1970. Prior to 2022, most monkeypox outbreaks were in central and western Africa. Within the last few months, cases have been diagnosed in 87 countries including the United States. Forty eight states have reported cases including Michigan.

Monkeypox (MPV) is a disease caused by infection with the monkeypox virus which belongs to the *Orthopoxvirus* genus. Other members of the *Orthopoxvirus* family include variola (which causes smallpox), vaccinia virus (used in the smallpox vaccine), and the cowpox virus. *Monkeypox is not related to chickenpox.*

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. (Currently this is the most common way that monkeypox is spreading in the U.S.)
- Touching objects, fabrics (clothing, bedding, or towels), and surfaces that have been used by someone with monkeypox.

This contact can happen during intimate contact including:

- Oral, anal, and vaginal sex or touching the genitals (penis, testicles, labia, and vagina) or anus of a person with monkeypox.
- Hugging, massage, and kissing.
- Prolonged face-to-face contact.
- Touching fabrics and objects during sex that were used by a person with monkeypox and that have not been disinfected, such as bedding, towels, fetish gear, and sex toys.

Signs and Symptoms

A person may experience all or only a few of the symptoms of monkeypox. Monkeypox symptoms usually start within 3 weeks of exposure to the virus. Symptoms include:

- Rash – most people with MPV will get a rash. Some people develop a rash before (or without) flu-like symptoms.

- The rash may be located on or near the genitals or anus but could also be on other areas like the hands, feet, chest, or face.
- 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.
- The rash may also be inside the body, including the mouth, vagina, or anus.
- Flu-like symptoms – including fever, headache, muscle aches and backache, sore throat, cough, swollen lymph nodes, chills or exhaustion.
 - If someone has flu-like symptoms, they will usually develop a rash 1-4 days later.

MPV is contagious when a [rash](#) is present and up until scabs have fallen off. Persons experiencing MPV symptoms should contact their health care provider for evaluation. While many of those affected in the current global outbreaks are men who have sex with men, anyone who has been in close contact with someone who has monkeypox can get the illness.

Providers

Providers should consult their local health department or MDHHS if MPV is suspected to coordinate specimen collection and testing. Due to the often [atypical presentation](#) of MPV in this outbreak, we are encouraging clinicians to have a high level of suspicion for MPV, especially in persons with [reported risk factors](#). Updated guidance for providers is available from both [MDHHS](#) and the [CDC](#).

Treatment

There are no treatments specifically for MPV infections. However, MPV and smallpox viruses are genetically similar, which means that antiviral drugs and [vaccines](#) developed to protect against smallpox can be used to prevent and treat MPV infections.

Vaccines

Research is being done on how effective the current smallpox vaccines are for the prevention of monkeypox virus.

States are receiving vaccine allocations from the Strategic National Stockpile in accordance with the number of MPV cases and the size of the underlying at-risk population. Michigan has received a limited supply of the vaccine, JYNNEOS. Additional limited allocations will follow in the next few months, but specific quantities and timelines are not yet known. The Michigan [Monkeypox Vaccine Strategy](#) is available at the [Michigan Monkeypox webpage](#). The federal government continues to purchase vaccine, but JYNNEOS is not likely to become broadly available in the near-term.

We may initiate contact with eligible individuals who have been identified as a close contact to an MPV case about receiving the vaccine. If you know you have had a contact with someone with MPV please contact us for more information at 517-788-4420 or 517-768-1664.