

# WHAT GAY & BISEXUAL MEN NEED TO KNOW ABOUT MONKEYPOX

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### 1. What is monkeypox?

Monkeypox is a viral infection transmitted through close personal contact, including prolonged face-to-face contact, kissing, sex, and other skin-to-skin contact. First identified in humans in 1970, monkeypox has similarities to the smallpox virus, but is significantly less severe. Deaths during the current outbreak are estimated to be very low.

### 2. What are the symptoms of monkeypox?

Symptoms of monkeypox typically include fever, headache, muscle aches, back pain, exhaustion, swollen lymph nodes and a skin rash or lesions. The lesions can present anywhere on the body including the face, hands, feet, mouth and genitalia. The associated rash/lesion can be confused with other diseases such as syphilis, herpes, chancroid, chicken pox, and shingles. Over the course of two weeks, the rash scabs over and resolves but can leave scars.

### 3. How is monkeypox transmitted?

Infection occurs through close contact with skin lesions, body fluids, respiratory droplets and contaminated materials such as bedding and clothing. The incubation period is usually from 6 to 13 days but can range from 5 to 21 days. Close physical contact with infected persons is the most significant risk factor for contracting the infection.

Individuals with monkeypox are infectious while they have symptoms. Steps for self-protection and prevention include avoiding skin to skin contact or prolonged face to face contact with anyone who has symptoms, avoiding contact with contaminated materials such as clothing or bedding, and keeping hands clean with water and soap or alcohol-based hand rub. Being in crowded conditions such as concerts, raves, and other public events might be especially risky during an outbreak of monkeypox.

### 4. What should you do if you believe you've contracted monkeypox?

If you develop a rash accompanied by fever, you should contact your health care provider. If your health care provider suspects monkeypox, a sample of the rash or lesion will be gathered and tested by PCR. If monkeypox is confirmed, isolation is recommended until the lesion scabs have fallen off and people should avoid direct contact.

### 5. Is monkeypox a sexually transmitted infection (STI)?

No, there is no evidence that monkeypox is sexually transmitted. However, the act of sex itself is a common form of direct contact involving skin-to-skin contact. In addition,

transmission can also occur through saliva and respiratory droplets – both opportunities that can arise during sex. Anyone who has close physical contact with an infected individual could be at risk for infection. If symptoms arise and you suspect it may be monkeypox, please contact your health care provider.

### 6. Are men who have sex with men (MSM) at higher risk for contracting the monkeypox virus?

Although the recent outbreaks in Europe and North America have occurred among gay and bisexual men, this is likely a result of coincidental contact with infected people at one or more recent crowded LGBTQ-focused events resulting in a cluster of cases within the community. Good public health should discourage singling out men who have sex with men (MSM) as this may cause providers to miss monkeypox in other communities, especially where other large, crowded events occur.

### Acknowledgements:

Written by Alexandra C. Avendaño, MA, Project Policy Analyst, University of California (UCLA) Los Angeles Hub for Health Intervention, Policy and Practice (HHIPP).

Reviewed by Ian W. Holloway, PhD, MSW, Director of UCLA HHIPP; Elizabeth S.C. Wu, MPH, Director of Research Programs, UCLA HHIPP; Anne W. Rimoin, PhD, MPH, UCLA Fielding School of Public Health, Infectious Disease Division of the Geffen School of Medicine; Jesse L. Clark, MD UCLA David Geffen School of Medicine; Pamina M. Gorbach MHS, DrPH, UCLA Fielding School of Public Health.

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