

Monkeypox (September 2022)

Health Service is closely monitoring the [global outbreak of monkeypox](#), is in touch with public health authorities on the virus, and adjusting our response, recommendations, and resources as needed. At this time, while still rare, monkeypox (Orthopoxvirus) has gained significant public health and media attention due to the unusual spread of cases globally. A significant percentage of US cases have been confirmed in the New York area.

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 variola virus, the virus that causes smallpox. Monkeypox symptoms are similar to smallpox symptoms, but milder, and monkeypox is rarely fatal. Monkeypox is not related to chickenpox.

Symptoms can include fever, headache, muscle aches and backache, swollen lymph nodes, chills, exhaustion, and a rash that can look like pimples or blisters. Most people infected with monkeypox will get a rash.

How does it spread?

Monkeypox predominantly spreads through close, physical contact between people. A person with monkeypox can spread it to others from the time symptoms start until the rash has fully healed and a fresh layer of skin has formed.

Who can get it?

Anyone can get monkeypox. Monkeypox spreads through intimate close, physical contact between people. This means 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). 98% of NYS cases

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.

Is there a vaccine?

Yes, but supplies are limited. Monkeypox Vaccination in NYS is currently only available through the County Public Health Departments.

Individuals with recent exposure to a suspected or confirmed monkeypox case within the past 14 days and those at high risk of a recent exposure to monkeypox, including those who have engaged in intimate or skin-to-skin contact with others in the past 14 days areas where monkeypox is spreading are eligible to receive the vaccine.

What can I do to protect myself?

- Ask your sexual partners whether they have a rash or other symptoms of monkeypox, such as fever, headache, muscle aches and backache, swollen lymph nodes, chills, or exhaustion.
- Avoid skin-to-skin contact with someone who has a rash or other monkeypox symptoms and those diagnosed with monkeypox.
- Don't share bedding, towels, clothing, utensils, or cups with a person with symptoms of monkeypox.
- Schedule an appointment for a vaccination if you meet eligibility criteria

I'm experiencing symptoms—what now? What about testing?

- If you start experiencing monkeypox symptoms even if they are mild, talk to your healthcare provider immediately. The Health Center is here to support you.
- **Testing is available** through the Health Service in coordination with Albany County Health Department. Students should contact Health Services (518)783-2554 and press option #1 to speak with the triage RN to make an appointment. After hours, students should contact Public Safety for a referral to the local Emergency Room.

I've been diagnosed with Monkeypox—what now?

- Isolate at home until the lesions have crusted over and you are no longer contagious.
- Contact Health Services to coordinate a medical leave with faculty notification for you
- Many individuals infected with the monkeypox virus have a mild, self-limiting disease course and only require symptom management.

Learn more about monkeypox

<https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/index.html>

<https://health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/zoonoses/monkeypox/>

<https://www.hrc.org/resources/monkeypox-and-what-you-need-to-know>