

Monkeypox

Public Health – Factsheet

Monkeypox is a rare disease caused by infection with monkeypox virus. Monkeypox virus is related to the smallpox virus, but typically causes less serious disease. Current evidence from the 2022 outbreak suggests that monkeypox spreads in three ways. This includes spread from person to person (most common method); from contact with contaminated objects (e.g. clothing, bedding, shared objects, etc.) and; from animals to humans (most common in prior outbreaks).

Anyone can get infected and spread monkeypox if they come into close contact with someone who has the virus, regardless of sex, race, gender or sexual orientation. Many of the global cases identified to date have reported close physical contact (including lengthy face-to-face and sexual contact) with someone who has monkeypox, or close physical contact with individuals at events where monkeypox has been reported. Health authorities at the provincial, national and international level are continuing to monitor the situation, including assessing and minimizing the risk.

Symptoms of Monkeypox

Monkeypox is usually a mild illness and most people recover on their own after a few weeks. However, in some cases, people may become very sick and death may occur.

Symptoms develop five to 21 days after exposure to the monkeypox virus. The symptoms occur in two stages and typically last two to four weeks.

In the first stage, symptoms may include:

- fever and chills
- muscle, back, or joint pain
- swollen lymph nodes
- headache or exhaustion

In the second stage, a rash develops, usually within one to three days (sometimes longer) after the fever starts. The rash often starts on the face, arms or legs, but can affect other parts of the body, such as the hands, feet, mouth and genitals. The rash usually lasts between 14 and 28 days, and changes through different stages before finally forming a scab, which later falls off.

People with monkeypox are considered to be contagious from the onset of the first symptom(s) until the scabs have fallen off and the skin beneath is healed.

Testing for Monkeypox

Testing is available for monkeypox through your health care provider. You can call Health Links – Info Santé at **204-788-8200** or **1-888-315-9257**, if you need help with accessing health care.

If you have symptoms and think you may have had contact with someone with monkeypox, let your health care provider know at the time you book an appointment to avoid exposing other people. Wear a well-made, well-fitting mask and cover any lesions with clothing or bandages.

Treatment for Monkeypox

Most cases are mild and people recover on their own. Although rare, severe cases and death can occur. For severe cases, antiviral treatment may be recommended.

Vaccine for Monkeypox

Imvamune® is the name of the vaccine used to protect against the monkeypox virus. Although Imvamune® is called the smallpox or monkeypox vaccine, it does not contain the smallpox or monkeypox viruses. It contains a weakened form of the vaccinia virus. Because this virus is closely related to the smallpox and monkeypox virus, the vaccine can protect against both infections.

The monkeypox vaccine can be used in two different ways to try to prevent infection:

- before getting exposed to the virus in someone at high risk of exposure (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis – PrEP); or
- after being exposed to the virus, but before you develop symptoms (Post-Exposure Prophylaxis – PEP).

Infection could still occur even after vaccination, but if that does occur, the infection is likely to be less severe compared to an unvaccinated person.

In Manitoba, the populations at greater risk of being exposed to monkeypox are eligible to receive pre-exposure prophylaxis. Public health officials will also follow up with individuals who have had close contact with someone with and discuss if the vaccine is recommended.

For more information about the vaccine and eligibility criteria, please visit the Manitoba Health monkeypox website at manitoba.ca/health/publichealth/diseases/monkeypox.html.

Isolation for Cases

Isolation of cases reduces the spread of monkeypox in your household and community. It is important to follow the advice of your local public health authority about when and how to isolate.

If you have been diagnosed with monkeypox, you should isolate until all scabs have fallen off and the skin underneath has healed. Until your rash has disappeared, you are still able to infect those around you.

During the infectious period (from the start of symptoms until the rash is gone), people should:

- Stay home and isolate in a separate area from other household members (e.g. private room for sleeping and washroom). If you do not have somewhere to isolate, you can discuss other options with public health.
- Avoid directly touching other people, including through sexual contact. After being deemed no longer contagious, cases should wear a condom during any sexual activity for 12 weeks.
- Avoid contact with those at higher risk of severe monkeypox illness including immunosuppressed people, pregnant women, and children under 12 years of age.
- Avoid areas commonly used by others in the home, where possible. Surfaces/ objects in common spaces that may be accessed by the case should be adequately cleaned and disinfected.
- Wear a well-made, well-fitting mask (medical mask preferred) if sharing space with others.
- Cover any lesions (e.g., long pants, sleeves, bandages).
- Avoid sharing items or objects, or exposing other people to clothes, towels, bedding, linens, or other materials used or worn by the infected person. Unless unable to do so, cases should be responsible for handling and laundering their own clothing, bedding, towels, etc. Cases should also be responsible for handling and washing their own utensils and dishes.
- Practice proper hand hygiene (washing with soap and water for at least 15 seconds or using alcohol-based hand sanitizer) and using a tissue or your elbow to cover coughs and sneezes.
- If breastfeeding, cases should seek advice from their healthcare provider.
- Avoid contact with animals, including household pets.

- Only leave isolation to access urgent medical care or for other similar emergencies.
- Notify your health care provider before your appointment to avoid exposing others. You should wear a well-fitting medical mask and cover your lesions with clothing or bandages when going to see your health care provider or a health care facility.
- Postpone elective medical visits and other elective procedures (e.g., elective dental visits, elective blood tests, etc.).
- Do not donate blood cells, tissue, breast milk, semen, or organs.
- Do not travel to other cities, regions, provinces, territories, or countries during the isolation period.

Contacts (people who have been exposed to monkeypox)

Public health will notify all close contacts and provide information on monitoring for symptoms including fever, chills, swollen lymph nodes, and skin rashes for 21 days after the last exposure to the infected person. Close contacts do not need to self-isolate (quarantine) if they do not have any symptoms. If symptoms develop, contacts should isolate at home and follow guidance for cases to prevent spread to others.

All contacts should:

- Practice proper hand hygiene (washing with soap and water for at least 15 seconds, or using alcohol based hand sanitizer) and use a tissue or your elbow to cover coughs and sneezes. Consider wearing a mask around others in enclosed indoor spaces.
- Do not donate blood, cells, tissue, breast milk, semen, or organs during the 21 days after the last exposure,
- Avoid all sexual contact during the monitoring period.
- Avoid non-essential interactions in enclosed indoor settings with those at higher risk of severe monkeypox illness including congregate settings (e.g., personal care home, assisted living facilities, etc.), immunosuppressed people, pregnant women, and young children. If this is unavoidable, consider wearing a well-fitting medical mask in these settings. Consult occupational health at your workplace if you work in a high-risk setting such as a health care facility or a congregate setting (e.g., personal care home, assisted living facilities, etc.).
- To prevent possible spread to animals, including pets, livestock, and wildlife, have someone else care for your animals. If this is not possible, wear a

well-fitting medical mask and gloves when near the animals. Practice proper hand hygiene before and after contact with the animal or items they have had contact with, and before putting on and after talking off gloves.

- Notify public health or call Health Links Links – Info Santé (204-788-8200 or toll free at 1-888-315-9257) if you develop symptoms.

Prevention, Cleaning and Disinfecting for Households with Cases

- If you have to be physically close to someone who is suspected or confirmed to have monkeypox in your household, you should both wear well-fitting medical masks.
- Ideally, only one individual in the home should provide direct care to the case, if and when needed. The caregiver should not be someone at higher risk of severe monkeypox illness.
- Avoid sharing personal items with the case (e.g., toothbrushes, razors, contaminated utensils, dishes, etc.). Routine washing with soap and warm water (dishwasher or by hand) is an effective disinfectant method.
- Practicing frequent hand hygiene before and after any contact with the infected person or after touching surfaces/objects within the person's environment, especially those that the person has had contact with, and after cleaning and disinfection. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- It is recommended that all waste and recycling associated with a case be double bagged, tied securely and disposed of as per regular household waste removal.
- Improve ventilation in the home when possible (e.g., opening windows).
- Standard household cleaning products/disinfectants can be used according to manufacturer directions to clean contaminated surfaces (e.g. high touch surfaces).
- Laundry (e.g., bedding, towels, clothing, etc.) can transmit the virus and should be handled with care. Do not shake them as they could spread infectious particles. Laundry may be washed as usual in a standard washing machine with hot water and detergent. Bleach is not necessary. Dry completely in a standard dryer.
- If an infected person is unable to launder their own items, caregivers should:
 - wear a well-fitting medical mask and disposable gloves. The mask and gloves should be properly disposed of after each use. Hands should be washed before and after putting on gloves and masks.
 - ensure the contaminated laundry does not come into contact with the skin or clothing.
 - cover any skin that could potentially come in contact with the contaminated laundry. Wash any exposed skin with soap and water.
 - remove and clean any of the caregiver's garments that may have come in contact with the contaminated laundry in the same manner as the contaminated laundry.
- Surfaces and objects with which the infected person may come into contact, should be frequently cleaned and disinfected, with particular focus paid to high-touch surfaces and objects (e.g., tabletops, countertops, toilets, door handles, light switches, computer keyboards, etc.). Clean and disinfect surfaces after each use.
- If a surface or object is visibly soiled, it should first be cleaned with regular cleaning products followed by disinfection with a standard household disinfectant. Ensure manufacturer's instructions are being followed when using these products. If using household bleach to disinfect (i.e., a 0.1 per cent sodium hypochlorite solution), instructions on how to dilute bleach are available at www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/home-safety/household-chemical-safety.html#a0.
- Single-use disposable cleaning equipment (e.g., disposable towels) is recommended. If disposable cleaning equipment is not available, the cleaning material (cloth, sponge etc.) should be washed, placed in a disinfectant solution effective against viruses, or 0.1 per cent sodium hypochlorite. If neither option is available, the cleaning material should be discarded.
- Activities such as dry dusting, sweeping, or vacuuming should be avoided. Wet cleaning methods are preferred. Rags and mops used for wet cleaning must be laundered according to laundering information above. If a vacuum cleaner equipped with a high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter is available, use this to vacuum upholstered furniture and carpeted floors. **Do not** vacuum furniture or carpet with a vacuum cleaner **without** a HEPA filter as this may spread infectious particles. Clean upholstered furniture and carpets that have visible soiling using commercially available cleaning products or professional steam cleaning.

For more information about monkeypox:

- Health Links – Info Santé at **204-788-8200** or **1-888-315-9257**
- **Manitoba Health website** – www.manitoba.ca/health/publichealth/diseases/monkeypox.html
- **Government of Canada's website** – www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/monkeypox.html
- **World health Organization website** – www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/monkeypox