



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS - MONKEYPOX

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WHAT IS MONKEYPOX

Monkeypox is a contagious or communicable condition that is associated with skin lesions. The Monkeypox illness usually causes symptoms of fever, muscle aches and swollen lymph nodes associated with chickenpox-like rashes usually on the hands and face.

WHAT CAUSES MONKEYPOX

- Monkeypox is a rare disease caused by the Monkeypox virus.
- The virus is normally found in animals but the disease may be transmitted from animals to humans, usually through bites or scratches by an animal carrying the virus, or through handling and consumption of bush meat from infected animals.
- **Endemic Countries** Monkeypox was first identified in humans in West Africa in 1970. Most cases are linked to persons with recent travel to countries where Monkey pox is endemic which are mainly in the region of West and Central Africa.
- The World Health Organisation lists eleven (11) African nations that the disease is endemic and one in which the condition was identified in animals only.
 - Monkeypox endemic countries are: Benin, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Nigeria, the Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone, and South Sudan.
 - Monkey was identified in animals only:- Ghana
- Prior to 2022, importations of monkeypox from an endemic country to another country was documented on eight previous occasions in the fifty years since the disease was first identified in humans in 1970.



HOW IS THE MONKEYPOX VIRUS SPREAD

The virus can be transmitted by contact and droplet exposure to infected fluid.

The virus is normally found in animals but the disease may be transmitted from animals to humans, usually through bites or scratches by animal carrying the virus or consumption of bush meat of infected animals. The animal reservoir remains unknown, although it is likely to be among rodents. Contact with live and dead animals through hunting and consumption of wild game or bush meat are known risk factors.

Human to human transmission of Monkeypox occurs by contact and droplet exposure via exhaled large droplets. Human to human transmission is limited and usually through close contact with infected respiratory tract secretions or skin lesions, or recently contaminated surfaces.

Monkeypox is however an emerging infectious disease which, though it can be spread to other people, person-to-person transmission alone usually cannot easily sustain an outbreak. Infections among persons outside of countries for which monkeypox is known to be endemic is usually linked to international travel.

The current outbreak has cases in three WHO regions, Europe, North America and Australia, and some cases are not associated with international travel. The World Health Organisation has reported that based on the pattern of transmission, the current 2022 outbreak is also occurring through sexual contact.

[Interrupting the Transmission of Monkeypox virus](#) may occur by application of standard, contact and droplet precautions. The use of COVID19 control measures will reduce the risk of transmission of monkeypox.

Historically, vaccination against smallpox had been shown to be protective against monkeypox. Therefore, vaccines used during the smallpox eradication programme may be used to provide protection against



monkeypox. Newer vaccines have also been developed and one has been approved for the prevention of monkeypox.

The vaccine (MVA-BN) as well as the specific treatment antiviral agent, tecovirimat, were approved for monkeypox within the last three years but these countermeasures are not yet widely available.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF MONKEYPOX INFECTION

The signs and symptoms of monkeypox infection will depend on various factors including time since exposure, age, pre-existing condition and the stage of the disease. Symptoms can be mild or severe, and associated with skin rash. Severe disease may be fatal.

Following exposure, infection of monkeypox will have an incubation period usually from 6 to 13 days but can range from 5 to 21 days.

- Symptoms include fever, chills, intense headaches, exhaustion, backache, muscle ache, swollen lymph nodes, and rash. The rash can be very itchy or painful.
 - [Phases of Monkeypox:](#)

The infection can be divided into two periods:

- the invasion period (lasts between 0–5 days) characterized by fever, intense headache, lymphadenopathy (swelling of the lymph nodes), back pain, myalgia (muscle aches) and intense asthenia (lack of energy). Lymphadenopathy is a distinctive feature of monkeypox compared to other diseases that may initially appear similar (chickenpox, measles, smallpox)
- the skin eruption period (usually begins within 1–3 days of appearance of fever). The rash tends to be more concentrated on the face and extremities rather than on the trunk. It affects the face (in 95% of cases), and palms of the hands and soles of the feet (in 75% of cases). Also affected are oral mucous membranes (in 70% of cases), genitalia (30%), and conjunctivae (20%), as well as the cornea.
- [The rash](#) evolves sequentially from macules (lesions with a flat base) to papules (slightly raised firm lesions), vesicles (lesions filled with



clear fluid), pustules (lesions filled with yellowish fluid), and crusts which dry up and fall off. The number of lesions varies from a few to several thousand. In severe cases, lesions can coalesce until large sections of skin slough off.

- [Who is at high risk for severe disease](#) Children and immunosuppressed persons are at higher risk for severe disease, and monkeypox during pregnancy may lead to complications, congenital monkeypox or stillbirth.

Monkeypox is confirmed by laboratory tests. If monkeypox is suspected, an appropriate sample is taken, usually from the skin lesion, and specimens packaged and shipped in accordance with national and international requirements. Polymerase chain reaction (PCR) is the preferred laboratory test.

IS MONKEYPOX FATAL

Although most cases in current outbreaks have presented with mild disease symptoms, monkeypox virus (MPXV) **may cause severe disease in certain population groups** (young children, pregnant women, immunosuppressed persons).

Monkeypox is similar to smallpox but less severe. It however may also be confused with other conditions such as chickenpox, syphilis or herpes. The rash of monkeypox however usually also have fluid-filled blisters called vesicles on the palms of the hands and associated with lymphadenopathy (that is enlarged lymph nodes that are usually painful)

The disease is often self-limiting with symptoms usually resolving spontaneously within 14 to 21 days.

On rare occasion, monkeypox is fatal in 3-6% of cases, and rates up to 11% have been reported.

WHAT IS THE TREATMENT FOR MONKEYPOX

The disease is often self-limiting with symptoms usually resolving spontaneously within 14 to 21 days. Monkeypox disease is treated with symptomatic therapy and supportive interventions where necessary.

The specific treatment antiviral agent, tecovirimat, was approved for monkeypox within the last three years but is not yet widely available.



Good general and respiratory hygiene significantly reduces the risk of transmission of communicable diseases such as COVID19 and influenza and less common conditions such as monkeypox. Persons must continue to practice physical distance, maintain mask wearing and frequent sanitization of hands and common touch areas, and report to the health department if fever and rash occurs following recent international travel or close contact with persons who travelled within the preceding three weeks.

CURRENT GLOBAL MONKEYPOX SITUATION – MAY 2022

The World Health Organization (WHO) held an emergency meeting on Friday, May 20, 2022 to discuss the recent outbreak of monkeypox. WHO committee meeting to discuss the issue is the Strategic and Technical Advisory Group on Infectious Hazards with Pandemic and Epidemic Potential (STAG-IH), which advises on infection risks that could pose a global health threat.

As of May 21, 2022 the WHO received reports of:

- 92 laboratory confirmed monkeypox cases and
- 28 suspected cases
- from 12 countries where the disease is not endemic.
- WHO expects more cases of monkeypox to emerge globally.
 - [WHO Public Health response](#)
 - Further public health investigations are ongoing in non-endemic countries that have identified cases, including extensive case finding and contact tracing, laboratory investigation, clinical management and isolation provided with supportive care.
 - Genomic sequencing, where available, have been undertaken to determine the monkeypox virus clade(s) in this outbreak
 - Vaccination for monkeypox, where available, is being deployed to manage close contacts, such as health workers. WHO is convening experts to discuss recommendations on vaccination.



- WHO Advice to Member States
 - Raise awareness about monkeypox
 - undertake comprehensive case finding
 - isolation of all cases and provide supportive care
 - contact tracing and supportive care to limit further onward transmission

WHAT IS THE LOCAL MONKEYPOX SITUATION IN JAMAICA

(Ministry of Health & Wellness, **KINGSTON, Jamaica. (May 24, 2022)**)

- There are no local cases of Monkeypox.
Jamaica's Public Health Response (based on WHO Guidelines) – NO CASES
- Key stakeholders in border control were alerted to the Global Monkeypox situation on May 19, 2022.
- The Ministry of Health & Wellness advised the public that during the first three weeks of May 2022, a monkeypox outbreak was occurring where the disease was not normally present. Cases were reported in countries in Europe, North America and Australia. The public will be provided with regular updates as new information becomes available.
- Health Care Workers are currently reviewing response measures including updating guidelines for workers.

HOW CAN I PROTECT MYSELF AGAINST MONKEYPOX

- Mild cases of monkeypox may go undetected and represent a risk of person-to-person transmission. There is likely to be little immunity to the infection in those travelling.
- Good respiratory and general hygiene significantly reduces the risk of transmission of communicable diseases such as COVID19 and influenza and less common conditions such as monkeypox. COVID-19 measures of practicing physical distancing, mask wearing and frequent hand sanitization reduce the likelihood of transmission of the monkeypox virus.
- Persons must report to the health department if fever and rash occurs following recent international travel or close contact with persons who travelled within the preceding three weeks. Health care workers are to



have a heightened sense of awareness of this illness and report suspected cases to the health department.

- Appropriate use of personal protective equipment is strongly encouraged. In addition, household disinfectants can kill the virus on surfaces. Frequent cleaning and sanitization is recommended for high traffic areas.
- People should avoid close personal contact with someone who has a rash illness or who is otherwise unwell.
- [What To Do In Case Of Suspect Or Confirmed Infection](#): People who suspect they have monkeypox should isolate and seek medical care.
- [High Likelihood Of Exposure](#) For persons who recently traveled and developed fever and rash within twenty days of returning, contact your local parish health department and seek medical care.

HOW CAN I CARE FOR OTHERS TO PREVENT TRANSMISSION OF MONKEYPOX

People should avoid close personal contact with someone who has a rash illness or who is otherwise unwell.

- [What To Do In Case Of Suspect Or Confirmed Infection](#) If you care for persons who develop rash with fever following an exposure, isolate both yourself and the person, contact the local parish health department and seek medical care.
- [High Likelihood Of Exposure](#) Persons who have a high likelihood of exposure are those who recently traveled and developed fever and rash within twenty days of returning.