

Guidance for Individuals Who Have Been Exposed to Monkeypox

What should I do if I have been exposed to someone with monkeypox?

If you have been exposed to someone with monkeypox, you should monitor your health for 21 days after your last exposure. This includes taking your temperature with a thermometer twice a day (morning and night) and checking to see if you have any signs or symptoms of monkeypox. If you develop symptoms (see below), please isolate yourself from others.

Do I have to avoid any activities?

If you have no symptoms, you can continue routine daily activities (e.g., go to work, school). However, you should not donate blood, cells, tissue, breast milk, semen, or organs during your 21-day symptom monitoring period. When thinking about what activities to participate in, consider avoiding events where close, personal, skin-to-skin contact is likely to occur. During your 21-day, avoid enclosed spaces, such as saunas, or sex clubs, where there is minimal or no clothing and where intimate contact might have a higher likelihood of spreading monkeypox. If you feel sick or have any rashes or sores, isolate immediately, and see a healthcare provider.

What signs and/or symptoms should I look out for?

Monkeypox symptoms usually appear 7 to 14 days (and up to 21 days) after being exposed. The first symptoms might be like the flu, such as fever (a temperature of 100.4°F or 38.0°C or greater), headache, muscle aches and backache, swollen lymph nodes, chills, or exhaustion. Within 1-3 days of these symptoms beginning, people develop a rash or sores. The rash or sores 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 sores will go through several stages, including scabs, before healing. You may experience all or only a few of these symptoms. Some people have reported developing the rash or sores before (or without) the flu-like symptoms. Monkeypox can be spread from the time symptoms start until all sores, including scabs, have healed and a fresh layer of skin has formed.

What should I do if I develop signs or symptoms of monkeypox?

Please isolate in a private room and avoid close contact with others in your household. If you do not have a private space to isolate, both you and your household members should wear a mask, if feasible. Other individuals who do not reside in your household should not visit while you are isolating. You should be evaluated by a doctor for potential cause of your signs or symptoms. Please call your doctor's office or hospital in advance to let them know you have been exposed to monkeypox. The doctor's office will assess your symptoms and work with the health department to facilitate monkeypox testing if appropriate.

What will happen if I am diagnosed with monkeypox?

If you are tested and diagnosed with monkeypox, you will be required to isolate at home until all of your rash lesions have resolved, the scabs have fallen off, and a fresh layer of skin has formed. While you are isolating, you should not leave your home unless it is required for medical care. If you need to seek healthcare while you are isolating, please call your doctor's office or hospital in advance to let them know you have been diagnosed with monkeypox. If you or a partner has monkeypox, the best way to protect yourself and others is to avoid close contact and not have sex of any kind (oral, anal, vaginal) and not kiss or touch each other's bodies while you are sick, especially any rash or sores. Do not share things like towels, fetish gear, sex toys, and toothbrushes.

If I am diagnosed with monkeypox, when can I end my isolation?

Your isolation can end when all lesions have resolved, all scabs have fallen off, and a fresh layer of intact skin has formed. This process typically takes 2-4 weeks. Due to this, the timing of isolation will vary from person to person. Individuals with monkeypox should contact their healthcare provider to determine if it is appropriate to end isolation. If you do not have a provider or health insurance, visit a public health clinic near you.

Once an individual with monkeypox ends isolation, they should avoid close contact with immunocompromised persons until all scabs have fallen off. Immunocompromised persons include persons with immunologic disorders (e.g., human immunodeficiency virus [HIV] infection or congenital immune deficiency syndrome), chronic diseases (e.g., diabetes, cancer, emphysema, or cardiac failure), or persons on immunosuppressive therapy (e.g., radiation, cytotoxic chemotherapy, anti-rejection medication, or steroids).