

MONKEYPOX FAQs

WHAT IS IT?

Monkeypox is a rare infection that's mainly found in parts of west or central Africa (often near rainforests but increasingly in some urban areas as well).

SYMPTOMS

If you get infected with monkeypox, it usually takes between 5 and 21 days for the first symptoms to appear.

The first symptoms of monkeypox include:

- High temperature
- Headache
- Muscle aches
- Backache
- Swollen glands
- Shivering (chills)
- Exhaustion

A rash usually appears 1 to 5 days after the first symptoms. The rash often begins on the face and then spreads to other parts of the body (which can include the genitals).

The rash is sometimes confused with chickenpox. It starts as raised spots, which turn into small blisters filled with fluid. These blisters eventually form scabs which later fall off.

The symptoms are usually mild and clear up in a few weeks. However, in rare cases symptoms can be severe, causing serious illness, especially for people with weakened immunity.

HOW DOES IT SPREAD?

PEOPLE

Monkeypox spreads person to person by:

- **Touching clothing, bedding or towels** used by someone with the monkeypox rash
- **Touching monkeypox skin blisters or scabs** (including during sex)
- The **coughs or sneezes** of a person with the monkeypox rash

Although anyone can get monkeypox, a large number of cases have been seen in men who have sex with men, so **it's particularly important to be aware of the symptoms if you're in this group.**

ANIMALS

Monkeypox also spreads via close contact with infected animals. It can be caught from infected rodents (such as rats, mice and squirrels) or non-human primates (such as monkeys or apes) in parts of west and central Africa if:

- The animal is infected and you're **bitten** or you **touch its blood, body fluids, spots, blisters or scabs**
- You **eat meat** from an infected animal that has **not been cooked thoroughly**
- You **touch other products** from infected animals (such as animal skin or fur)

WHEN TO CONTACT YOUR DOCTOR

There are quite a few viral infections that start off with a fever and cause a rash, so it's best for you to speak with your doctor if you have these symptoms.

However, before you visit the doctor's office you must:

- Call the doctor's office and tell them about your symptoms, whether you've had close contact with someone who has or might have monkeypox and whether you've recently travelled to central or west Africa.
- Stay at home and avoid close contact with other people until you've been told what to do.

Please note that you should be particularly cautious if you have a weakened immune system.

ARE THERE TREATMENTS AVAILABLE ON ISLAND?

Vaccines and antivirals are being sourced to be offered on island as soon as possible. The Ministry of Health will provide updates on available treatments.

WHAT ARE THE BERMUDA HEALTH AUTHORITIES DOING?

- The Office of the Chief Medical Officer is in communication with primary care providers throughout the island as well as port health personnel.
- The Epidemiology and Surveillance Unit has increased their level of surveillance in order to monitor and assess any developments on island.
- Border staff have been trained to know what to look out for.
- Hospital staff are preparing to treat any cases that may arise on island

TRAVEL SAFETY TIPS

DO

- Wash your hands with soap and water regularly or use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser
- Only eat meat that has been cooked thoroughly

DON'T

- Travel if you have monkeypox or you've been exposed to monkeypox
- Go near wild or stray animals, including dead animals
- Go near any animals that appear unwell
- Eat or touch meat from wild animals (bush meat)
- Share bedding or towels with people who are unwell and may have monkeypox
- Have close contact with people who are unwell and may have monkeypox.

If you suspect you have caught or been exposed to monkeypox you must call your doctor or the Communicable Disease Clinic at the Hamilton Health Centre on 278-6442.