

Monkeypox in Colorado: What you need to know

Monkeypox is a virus that usually causes a mild illness and a characteristic rash. Symptoms may start with a flu-like illness including fever, headache, muscle aches, exhaustion, and swollen lymph nodes. Typically, within 1-3 days a rash develops. The rash can occur on any part of the body including the genital region. The rash typically changes from red spots to red bumps to blisters to pustules (pus-filled blisters) before scabbing over and resolving. Rectal pain has been associated with monkeypox in some recent cases. In rare cases, the illness may become severe requiring hospitalization. Deaths have not been reported from recent outbreaks. Monkeypox infection can last 2-4 weeks.

Vaccination for monkeypox is not widely available and is not recommended for most people. Individuals who were recent close contacts of a person with monkeypox might be eligible for the vaccine within a certain period after exposure.

How is monkeypox transmitted and how can it be prevented?

Transmission of monkeypox is thought to occur via large respiratory droplets requiring prolonged face-to-face exposure, or **direct contact with bodily fluid or sores**. Many of the recent cases have been attributed to sexual or other intimate contact. Transmission may also occur through indirect contact, such as through clothing or linens that have been in contact with monkeypox sores. Incubation, the time from being exposed to getting sick, is typically 1-2 weeks, but may be up to 3 weeks.

How to prevent getting monkeypox:

- Avoid close contact with individuals reporting symptoms
- Wear a mask if you are in contact with someone displaying symptoms

When to suspect monkeypox

Consider monkeypox if you have a new rash and any of the following conditions:

- Fever or swollen lymph nodes
- Close contact with a person known or suspected to have monkeypox
- Recent travel to Europe, Africa, or Canada

What to do if you think you might have monkeypox

- Call your primary care provider OR
- Call the Denver Sexual Health Clinic if you do not have a primary care provider (only if you have a genital rash)
- **Until you are seen by a medical professional**
 - **Avoid sex and other forms of close contact with others**
 - **Keep sores covered and wear a high a quality medical mask when around others**