

How Monkeypox Spreads



Monkeypox spreads in a few ways.

Monkeypox can spread to anyone through close, personal, often skin-to-skin contact, including:

- Direct contact with monkeypox rash, scabs, or body fluids from a person with monkeypox.
- Touching objects, fabrics (e.g, clothing, bedding, or towels), and surfaces that have been used by someone with monkeypox.
- Contact with respiratory secretions.

This direct contact can happen during intimate contact, including:

- Oral, anal, and vaginal sex or touching the genitals (penis, testicles, labia, and vagina) or anus of a person with monkeypox.
- Hugging, massaging, and kissing.
- Prolonged face-to-face contact.
- Touching fabrics and objects during sex that were used by a person with monkeypox and that have not been disinfected, such as bedding, towels, fetish gear, and sex toys.

A pregnant person can spread the virus to their fetus through the placenta.

It's also possible for people to get monkeypox from infected animals, either by being scratched or bitten by the animal, or by preparing or eating meat or using products from an infected animal.

A person with monkeypox can spread it to others from the time symptoms start until the rash has fully healed and a fresh layer of skin has formed. The illness typically lasts 2–4 weeks.

Scientists are still researching:

- If the virus can be spread when someone has no symptoms.
- How often monkeypox is spread through respiratory secretions, or when a person with monkeypox symptoms might be more likely to spread the virus through respiratory secretions.
- Whether monkeypox can be spread through semen, vaginal fluids, urine, or feces.