



Monkeypox 101

The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared monkeypox an international public health emergency. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), as of August 12, 2022, there were approximately 11,177 confirmed cases in the U.S., including 851 in Georgia, ranking it fourth nationwide in total cases (behind New York, California, and Florida).

What is Monkeypox?

Monkeypox is a disease caused by monkeypox virus, a member of the Orthopoxvirus genus in the family Poxviridae. It is related to smallpox but less severe; it is not related to chickenpox.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms typically begin within three weeks of exposure. Initial symptoms include fever and swollen lymph nodes. This is followed in 1-4 days by a vesicular/pustular/nodular rash which can last for 2-3 weeks. The rash can be found on the face, palms of the hands, soles of the feet, eyes, mouth, throat, groin, and genital and/or anal regions of the body. The rash may initially look like pimples or blisters and may be painful or itchy.

When is someone contagious?

A person with monkeypox can spread it to others from the onset of symptoms until the rash has fully healed and a fresh layer of skin has formed. The illness typically lasts 2-4 weeks. Over 85% of individuals do not require hospitalization; special air handling is not required.

How is monkeypox transmitted?

The monkeypox virus can spread from person to person through direct contact with the infectious rash or during intimate physical contact such as kissing, cuddling or sexual intercourse.

Monkeypox is *not* transmitted like COVID-19, influenza, or measles, and requires skin-to-skin or other close surface contact.

This means far lower risk to persons who are in a room/space with someone with monkeypox, as long as they don't directly touch the infected individual.





Who is most at risk?

Anyone can contract monkeypox, but it is one's behavior that determines risk. In a multinational study of more than 500 cases that were reported between April and June of 2022, researchers found that 98% of monkeypox cases were among men who have sex with men; of those, 67% were HIV infected. The GA Department of Health (DPH) anticipates that the demographic characteristics will change and that more women and heterosexual men will become infected. It is important to stress that it is one's behavior that influences the risk of contracting monkeypox, not necessarily one's character or core values.

What don't we know yet about monkeypox?

Scientists are still researching:

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

How can I prevent transmission?

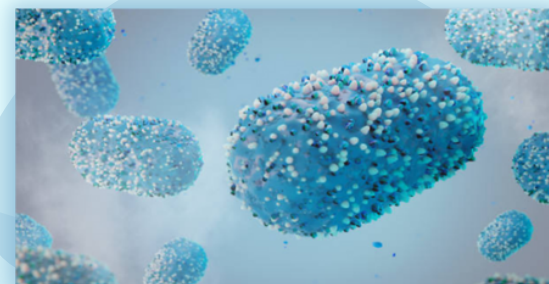
There are two major ways to prevent transmission: behavior and vaccination. Monkeypox is transmitted through close, skin-to-skin contact. Therefore, you should:

- Avoid close, skin-to-skin contact with people who have a rash that looks like monkeypox.
 - Do not touch the rash or scabs of an infected person.
 - Do not kiss, hug, cuddle or have sex with an infected person.
- Avoid contact with objects and materials utilized by an infected person.
 - Do not share eating utensils or cups with an infected person.
 - Do not handle/touch the bedding, towels or clothing of an infected person.
- Frequent hand-washing with soap and warm water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer is strongly encouraged.
- The preferred vaccine to protect against monkeypox is JYNNEOS, a two-dose vaccine taken one month apart. It takes approximately two weeks after the second dose of JYNNEOS for its immune protection to reach its maximum.



How may I learn more?

If you are a student and feel you may have symptoms of monkeypox, please call **Augusta University Student Health Services** at **706-721-3448** to make an appointment for an evaluation. The clinic does not provide testing or vaccination but can help refer you to AU-Health or the local health department. If you are high risk for monkeypox infection and need vaccination, or have developed symptoms and need testing, both are available via a new program called **"Project Impact Augusta"** at the **Richmond County Health Department, 950 Laney-Walker Blvd.** Call **706-667-4342**.



For more information: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, World Health Organization, Georgia Department of Public Health