

# Monkeypox (MPX) Factsheet

## What is Monkeypox?

Monkeypox (MPX) is a disease that has been around since the 1950's. It was first found in laboratory monkeys; that's why it was named monkeypox (*information provided by Dr Paul Griffin, Director of Infectious Diseases at Mater Hospital: <https://youtu.be/9xhJHOGn0Dc>*).

Monkeypox is caused by infection with the monkeypox virus. It normally causes a mild illness with a rash. Most people recover within a few weeks but some, people may develop severe disease and need to go to hospital.

It is spread mostly through skin-to-skin contact with someone who has monkeypox or contact with fluids, such as saliva and blood.

Since May 2022, there has been a global increase in cases, involving more than 100 countries. Monkeypox is now spreading in places where it is not usually seen. The current outbreak is mostly impacting men who have sex with men.

## What are the symptoms of Monkeypox?

Symptoms may develop up to 21 days from close contact with someone with Monkeypox. Symptoms can include a rash that can be painful and affect any part of the body including:

- genitals
- area around the anus and buttocks
- inside the mouth
- face
- hands and arms
- feet and legs.

The rash caused by Monkeypox may look like pimples or blisters. You can have a small or large number of sores. The rash may change and go through different stages before healing completely. You may experience the rash first, followed by other symptoms. You may experience just the rash and no other symptoms.

Other Monkeypox symptoms can include general symptoms that can occur before or alongside the rash, such as:

- **fevers**
- chills
- muscle aches
- swollen **lymph nodes**
- feeling very tired
- headache
- anal and rectal pain

*This resource was produced by the CALD COVID-19 Health Engagement Project (CCHEP) adapted from a Monkey Pox fact Sheets from Department of Health, Victoria Health, Dr Paul Griffin Director of Infectious Diseases, Queensland Positive People, and in consultation with Queensland Health.*

- pain on urination.

Symptoms can resemble sexually transmitted infections (STIs) such as [herpes](#) or [syphilis](#) as well as other diseases with a rash such as measles or chickenpox.

Children, pregnant women, and people with a weakened immune system are considered at higher risk of developing severe disease.

## What should you do if you develop symptoms of Monkeypox?

If you have symptoms of monkeypox you should stay home, restrict your contact with others, and call for medical care and testing S

If you have had contact with someone with monkeypox contact your local doctor or [public health unit](#).

Seek medical attention if you get symptoms or have travelled to a location where there are cases . Wear a mask and cover any lesions or blisters.

Call your GP clinic, or your nearest [local sexual health service](#) and let them know your symptoms.. If you have any rashes, lesions, sores, or scabs make sure these are covered.

## How does Monkeypox spread?

Monkeypox does not spread easily. It is mostly spread from person-to-person through skin-to-skin contact with someone who has monkeypox, especially with skin rashes, lesions, sores, or scabs.

It can also spread through contact with clothing or linens (such as bedding or towels) used by an infected person. Sometimes it can spread through respiratory droplets (such as coughs and sneezes) from an infected person, however this is less likely.

It does not spread via casual contact. In areas where cases have been reported, spread of monkeypox may occur through contact with infected wild animals.

People with monkeypox are infectious from the time that they develop their first symptoms until all lesions are completely healed, crust, dry and fall off with a new layer of skin forming underneath.

## Who is at risk?

Anyone who has close skin-to-skin contact (such as prolonged or intimate contact) with someone who has monkeypox can become infected.

People at highest risk are men who have sex with men, particularly those who are travelling to outbreak areas, have multiple sexual partners or attend large parties or sex on premises venues.



To date, most people with monkeypox in Australia have been infected while overseas but local transmission has been increasing, particularly in Queensland with multiple high-risk contacts in Brisbane, on the Sunshine Coast and the Gold Coast, including a few contacts in Brisbane that are unable to be contact traced.

## How can Monkeypox be prevented?

Monkeypox can be prevented by avoiding contact with people with suspected or confirmed monkeypox. This includes contact with any potentially contaminated materials, such as bedding and towels, that have been in contact with an infected person.

It can also be prevented by limiting your number of sexual partners and ensuring that you have their contact details, until you are fully vaccinated. Vaccination will also protect people from monkeypox.

People who are at highest risk should be aware of the symptoms of monkeypox and watch out for symptoms.

Wash hands with soap and water or alcohol-based sanitiser. Be aware of the risk of monkeypox if travelling overseas.

## Is Monkeypox Treatable?

Mild Monkey Pox cases can be treated at home by drinking enough water, taking paracetamol or ibuprofen, and resting. Serious cases requires the expertise of a doctor that has special training in infectious diseases. it is best to talk to your GP or sexual health service to find the best treatment option for you.

Because Monkey Pox is closely related to the virus that causes smallpox, the smallpox vaccine (**JYNNEOS**) can protect people from getting Monkey Pox. Vaccines are often encouraged for persons at greatest risk of getting MPXV. We currently have **very limited** supplies of the Monkey Pox vaccine in Queensland.

We encourage any people living with HIV interested in being vaccinated, in particular those with multiple sexual partners, or those who might be travelling to Monkey Pox hotspots overseas, to get in contact with their [local sexual health service](#) and be put on the **waiting list for the vaccine** when it becomes available.

## Where to get help

- Call **000** for an ambulance if you are sick and cannot breathe properly, or have chest pains, or feel like you will collapse. Ask for an interpreter if you need one. Tell them you have monkeypox
- If you have had contact with someone with monkeypox or you need further assistance, please contact your local doctor, community health centre or nearest [public health unit](#).
- Call a [GP \(Family Doctor\)](#)
- Call **13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84)** 24/7 for confidential health advice from a qualified nurse.
- To talk to someone about your symptoms, please call the Health Direct hotline on **1800 022 222** and press 2.