



## Mpox

# Mpox in Animals and Pets

Updated August 18, 2023

Mpox is a zoonotic disease, which means it can spread between animals and people. While the animal reservoir is unknown, small mammals (for example, rope and sun squirrels, giant-pouched rats, African dormice) are thought to maintain the virus in the environments of West and Central Africa. People can get infected with the virus through direct contact with infected animals, often while hunting, trapping, and processing infected animals or their body parts and fluids. Small mammals can carry the virus without symptoms, while non-human primates can get sick with mpox and have signs of disease like



humans. In 2003, an outbreak of mpox in domesticated prairie dogs occurred after they shared bedding and caging with a shipment of infected small mammals from West Africa. This led to 47 human cases in 6 states in the United States. Isolating infected and exposed animals and people can help prevent further spread of mpox.

## What We Know About Mpox in Animals

- Mpox virus can infect a wide range of mammal species, including monkeys, anteaters, hedgehogs, prairie dogs, squirrels, and shrews.
- We are still learning which species of animals can get mpox. While we do not know if reptiles, amphibians, or birds can get mpox, it is unlikely since these animals have not been found to be infected with other orthopoxviruses.
- Not all animals have a rash when they have mpox.
- Infected animals can spread mpox virus to people and other animals, and it is possible that people who are infected can spread mpox virus to animals through close contact.
- Mpox virus can be found in the rash caused by mpox (scabs, crusts, fluids) and infected body fluids, including respiratory secretions, and potentially in urine (pee) and feces (poop).

## What We Know About Mpox in Pets


- We don't know for sure if pets like dogs and cats can be infected with mpox, but it is possible.
- People with mpox could possibly spread the virus to pets through close contact, including petting, cuddling, hugging, kissing, licking, sharing sleeping areas, and sharing food.

No pets or other animals were confirmed to have mpox during the 2022-2023 global mpox outbreak.

# How to Care for Pets if You Have Mpox

- If you have mpox, avoid contact with animals, including pets, domestic animals, and wildlife to prevent spreading the virus.
  - Ask friends or family members who live in a separate home to care for your animals until you fully recover. After you recover, disinfect your home before bringing healthy animals back; follow guidance in [Disinfecting Home and Other Non-Healthcare Settings](#).
- People who are at increased risk for severe mpox should not care for animals that had close contact with a person with mpox. This includes
  - People with weakened immune systems
  - Pregnant people
  - Children under 8 years old
  - People with a history of atopic dermatitis or eczema

## Steps to Take if You Think Your Pet Has Mpox

- Possible symptoms of mpox in pets include rash, lethargy, lack of appetite, coughing, bloating, nasal and/or eye secretions or crust, fever, and/or pox-like skin sores (may initially resemble a pimple or blister first).
- If your pet had close contact with a person with probable or confirmed mpox **and** they have a new rash or two other symptoms, get your pet tested for mpox.
- Call your veterinarian if you notice an animal appears sick within 21 days after contact with a person with probable or confirmed mpox. A veterinarian can help notify your [state public health veterinarian](#)  [136 KB, 7 pages] [↗](#) or [state animal health official](#) [↗](#), who can assist with getting high-risk pets tested.
- Separate the sick animal from other pets and animals.
- Limit direct contact between the animal and people for at least 21 days until they are fully recovered or a veterinarian tells you it's safe.
- Wash your hands often and wear clothing that covers your skin when caring for and cleaning up after sick animals. Wash your clothes after caring for sick animals.
- Disinfect animal bedding, enclosures, food dishes, and any other items in direct contact with infected animals following the [Disinfecting Home and Other Non-Healthcare Settings](#).
- Do not shake soiled laundry and bedding (including disposable rodent bedding)

For household disinfection, follow [Disinfecting Home and Other Non-Healthcare Settings](#).

## Mpox in Pets and Other Animals

We are still learning about which mammals can be infected with mpox virus. We should assume any mammal can be infected. The table shows which animals can be infected with mpox virus or other closely related orthopoxviruses.

Type of rodents	Can be infected with mpox?	Can be infected with other orthopoxviruses?
Prairie dogs	Yes	Yes
Squirrels	Yes	Yes
Marmots and groundhogs	Yes	Yes
Chinchillas	Yes	Unknown
Giant-pouched rats	Yes	Unknown

Gerbils	Unknown	Yes
Guinea pigs	Unknown	Yes
Hamsters	Unknown	Yes
Mice	Possibly*	Yes
Rats	Possibly*	Yes
<b>Type of carnivores</b>	<b>Can be infected with mpox?</b>	<b>Can be infected with other orthopoxviruses?</b>
Dogs	Unknown <sup>†</sup>	Yes
Cats	Unknown	Yes
<b>Type of lagomorphs</b>	<b>Can be infected with mpox?</b>	<b>Can be infected with other orthopoxviruses?</b>
Domestic rabbits	Adults: possibly*	Yes
<b>Type of insectivores</b>	<b>Can be infected with mpox?</b>	<b>Can be infected with other orthopoxviruses?</b>
Hedgehogs	Yes	Unknown
Shrews	Yes	Yes
<b>Type of non-human primates</b>	<b>Can be infected with mpox?</b>	<b>Can be infected with other orthopoxviruses?</b>
Monkeys	Yes	Yes
Apes	Yes	Yes
<b>Type of domestic and farm animals</b>	<b>Can be infected with mpox?</b>	<b>Can be infected with other orthopoxviruses?</b>
Cows	Unknown	Yes
Camels	Unknown	Yes
Goats	Unknown	Unknown

Sheep	Unknown	Unknown
Pigs	Unknown	Unknown
<b>Type of wildlife</b>	<b>Can be infected with mpox?</b>	<b>Can be infected with other orthopoxviruses?</b>
Raccoons	Unknown	Yes
Skunks	Unknown	Yes
Voles	Unknown	Yes
Badgers	Unknown	Yes
Coyotes	Unknown	Yes
Foxes	Unknown	Yes

\*Indicates that not all animals of this type are susceptible, this may vary by species, and variety or strain of the animal.

†[One published report](#) suggests dogs may be susceptible to mpox virus. However, [follow-up investigations](#) did not establish disease in the reported animal. Further research and surveillance are needed to determine whether dogs are susceptible.

Last Reviewed: August 18, 2023