

CDC KEY MESSAGES

U.S. monkeypox outbreak 2022

Issue #4 – July 21, 2022

This document summarizes key messages about the monkeypox outbreak and CDC’s response. It is distributed weekly. [Updated content is in blue](#). For the most current information, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/monkeypox>.

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OUTBREAK SUMMARY

CDC is closely tracking cases of monkeypox that have been reported since mid-May in the United States and many other countries without a history of monkeypox activity, including in Europe, the Americas, the Middle East, Asia, Australia, and some countries in Africa.

- As of **July 20**, there have been **2,323** confirmed cases of probable or confirmed monkeypox in **43** U.S. states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.
 - Current U.S. and global maps and case counts [are available here](#).
- Evidence indicates that the virus is spreading mostly through close, personal, often skin-to-skin contact with someone who has monkeypox.
- [All five commercial laboratory companies taking part in the U.S. government’s expanded orthopoxvirus testing effort – Labcorp, Mayo Clinic Laboratories, Quest Diagnostics, Aegis Sciences, and Sonic Healthcare USA – have begun testing. Combined with the existing capability of the facilities in the Laboratory Response Network, this will bring the total U.S. testing capacity to 80,000 per week.](#)
- On June 28, CDC activated its Emergency Operations Center to support the agency’s monkeypox response. This activation allows CDC to bring more resources and operational support to bear against this outbreak.

- A substantial number of people who have been diagnosed with monkeypox are reporting anonymous contacts, or contacts with people who cannot be identified for contact monitoring and consideration for post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP). As a result, CDC and partner agencies are expanding vaccine use as a priority to stop virus transmission. On June 28, the federal government announced a strategy to vaccinate and protect people at risk for monkeypox, prioritize vaccines for areas with the highest numbers of cases, and provide guidance to state, tribal, local, and territorial health officials to aid their planning and response efforts.
- [CDC and the Department of Health and Human Services \(HHS\) have distributed more than 191,000 doses of the JYNNEOS vaccine from the Strategic National Stockpile to states and jurisdictions nationwide.](#)
- CDC and HHS are working closely with partners to ensure there are enough doses available to vaccinate all people for whom vaccination is recommended. CDC is working with state and local health officials to identify people who may have been in contact with people who have tested positive, so those contacts can monitor their health, be counseled on post-exposure vaccine prophylaxis, if indicated, and seek care if they develop symptoms.
- [In addition, CDC has begun taking steps to simplify the process U.S. healthcare providers can use to request the antiviral drug tecovirimat \(TPOXX\) to treat patients with monkeypox. A new web page clarifies that forms and other documentation required for obtaining TPOXX can be submitted after clinicians receive the drug and begin patient treatment. In addition, earlier requirements to photograph lesions, collect specimens, and ship them to CDC are now optional. Healthcare providers can begin administering TPOXX as soon as they obtain informed consent from the patient. Additional modifications are being worked out with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration \(FDA\) and will be announced soon.](#)
- [The World Health Organization’s International Health Regulations Emergency Committee is scheduled to meet again June 21 to discuss whether monkeypox should be declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern \(PHEIC\), WHO’s highest level of global alert. The committee decided against declaring monkeypox a PHEIC in June, but recommended the outbreak be closely monitored and the decision reviewed after a few weeks.](#)
- While this level of monkeypox activity is unexpected, the risk to the general U.S. population is low. People with monkeypox in the current outbreak generally report having close, sustained physical contact with other people who have monkeypox.
- While anyone can catch monkeypox if they have close contact with someone who has monkeypox, regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation, many of those affected in the current global outbreaks are gay, bisexual, or other men who have sex with men.
- CDC and our U.S. health partners have experience effectively responding to monkeypox cases in the United States. We had two cases imported from Africa in 2021 and responded to an outbreak involving 47 cases in 2003.
- CDC urges health departments, clinicians, and the public to remain vigilant, institute appropriate infection prevention and control measures, and notify public health authorities of suspected cases to reduce disease spread.

WHAT CDC IS DOING

- CDC is working with state and local health officials to identify people who may have been in contact with the people who have tested positive, so those contacts can have the information they need to monitor their

health and seek care if symptoms appear. CDC has distributed detailed information on identifying and testing for potential infections to clinicians.

- CDC is providing guidance on risk assessment and public health management of monkeypox cases and contacts in travel settings.
- A [Health Alert Network update](#) published June 14 highlighted two emerging issues in the monkeypox response:
 - Some aspects of the clinical presentation are different from what has been seen historically in countries where most previous monkeypox outbreaks have occurred.
 - A number of monkeypox cases were reported in people who had no obvious link to international travel (often called “community cases”).
- These two issues raised concerns that some monkeypox infections in the United States may not be recognized and tested. CDC has updated and expanded its case definition to encourage testing for monkeypox in people with a rash and who may be at risk for developing monkeypox.
- CDC is working with community health organizations, including multiple partners in the LGBTQIA+ community, to raise awareness of the outbreak and share accurate information about what people can do to protect their health and the health of others.
- CDC posted a [travel health notice \(THN\)](#) to inform travelers and clinicians about monkeypox-related health issues that could affect travelers’ health.
- CDC is supporting diagnostic testing at Laboratory Response Network (LRN) labs, which conduct tests for orthopoxviruses like monkeypox virus; and at CDC itself, which conducts viral characterization testing specifically for monkeypox.
- [CDC is collaborating with GeoSentinel, a worldwide communication and data collection network for the surveillance of travel-related illnesses, to collect information on monkeypox cases internationally. This will allow for a better understanding of the epidemiology of this outbreak.](#)
- CDC has been communicating information more broadly to clinical and lab audiences through interactive partner calls, including:
 - Hosting two Clinician Outreach and Communication Activity (COCA) calls that shared information with more than 17,000 participants.
 - Sending news of new commercial laboratory testing options to more than 64,000 subscribers of its [COCA Now email updates](#).
 - Distributing [Health Alert Network](#) notices to inform thousands of clinicians about updated and expanded case definitions.
 - Sharing weekly updates with more than 90 partner organizations, including state, tribal, local, and territorial agencies, public health organizations, and clinical, community, and LGBTQ+ organizations that forward information to their members.
 - Conducting ongoing consultations through a Clinician Call Center that was quickly set up to respond to individual providers and state and local health officials.
- CDC researchers are working with our partners to learn how long the virus has been circulating; how the virus was introduced into some of the current clusters of cases; the clinical course of illness; and whether the virus is being spread through contact with semen or vaginal fluids.
- CDC is facilitating access to vaccines and therapeutics for people who may have been exposed to monkeypox.
- [CDC continues to provide technical assistance and respond to inquiries and information requests from state, tribal, local, and territorial health departments and partner organizations.](#)

- Monkeypox is a rare but potentially serious disease that typically begins with a flu-like illness and swelling of the lymph nodes and progresses to include a widespread rash on the face and body.
 - However, in recent cases, patients have developed rashes without having flu-like symptoms first.
- Monkeypox is caused by a virus that is in the same family as the virus that causes smallpox, but it typically results in a milder infection.
- Most infections last 2-4 weeks and resolve without specific treatment.
- The type of monkeypox seen in this outbreak is rarely fatal, and more than 99% of people who get this form of the disease are likely to survive. However, some groups are likely at higher risk of severe illness, including children under age 8, people who have weakened immune systems or are pregnant, and people with history of atopic dermatitis or eczema.
- Monkeypox is endemic in parts of Africa, with more than 1,000 cases reported annually in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in recent years. Nigeria has reported ongoing spread of monkeypox since 2017, when the virus re-emerged after nearly 40 years with no reported cases.
- Analysis by CDC experts has found that there are at least two genetically distinct variants of monkeypox virus circulating in the current outbreak, both of which share common ancestors of strains present in Nigeria since 2017. This shows it's likely that there were at least two separate instances where the monkeypox virus spread from animals to people in Nigeria, then began to spread person-to-person through close contact.
- [Prior to the current outbreak, there were at least eight reported monkeypox cases in travelers who visited Nigeria and returned home with monkeypox infections \(including cases in the United States, United Kingdom, Israel, and Singapore\). In the United Kingdom, several additional monkeypox cases occurred in people who had contact with travelers who had monkeypox.](#)
- Experts have yet to identify where monkeypox virus is found in nature, but it's thought that small mammals in some parts of Africa play a role in spreading the virus to people and other forest animals, like monkeys.

TRANSMISSION

- Monkeypox is caused by a virus that can spread from animals to people. It can spread between people when someone has contact with someone who is infected with monkeypox or touches materials that are contaminated with the virus.
- Monkeypox can spread to anyone through:
 - Direct contact with monkeypox rash or scabs on a person's skin.
 - Contact with objects, fabrics (clothing, bedding, or towels), and surfaces that have been used by someone with monkeypox.
 - Contact with respiratory secretions during prolonged, face-to-face contact.
- Monkeypox can be spread during intimate contact, including:
 - Oral, anal, and vaginal sex, or touching the genitals or anus of a person with monkeypox.
 - Hugging, massage, kissing, or talking closely.
 - Touching fabrics, shared surfaces, and objects that were used by a person with monkeypox, such as bedding, towels, fetish gear and sex toys.
- To learn more about how monkeypox can spread, visit CDC's [How it Spreads](#) page.

SYMPTOMS

People with monkeypox may first develop a flu-like illness with fever, headache, muscle aches, exhaustion, and enlarged lymph nodes. A characteristic rash, which can appear like blisters or pimples, occurs a few days later.

- However, in recent cases, patients have developed localized rashes around the genitals or anus without having flu-like symptoms first.

- Early flu-like symptoms of monkeypox can include:
 - Fever
 - Headache
 - Muscle aches and backache
 - Swollen lymph nodes
 - Chills
 - Exhaustion
- The rash sometimes is located on or near the genitals or anus, but may be in other areas like the hands, feet, chest, or face.
 - The sores can look like pimples or blisters and may be painful or itchy.
 - The sores typically go through several stages, including scabs, before healing.
 - Sores may be inside the body, including the mouth, vagina, or anus.
- Monkeypox can be spread from the time symptoms start until all sores have healed and a fresh layer of skin has formed.
- The illness may last for up to 2–4 weeks and usually resolves without specific treatment.
- For more information on symptoms, see www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/symptoms.html.
- If you're a healthcare worker looking for more information on how to recognize monkeypox, please see www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/clinicians/clinical-recognition.html

TESTING

- In June, CDC began distributing its orthopoxvirus test to five commercial laboratory companies – Labcorp, Mayo Clinic Laboratories, Quest Diagnostics, Aegis Sciences, and Sonic Healthcare USA – to increase monkeypox testing capacity and access.
- **As of July 18, all five commercial laboratory companies in this expanded orthopoxvirus testing effort have begun testing. Combined with the existing capability of the facilities in the Laboratory Response Network, this brings the total U.S. testing capacity to 80,000 per week.**
- Healthcare providers can order the orthopoxvirus test from these companies just as they normally would order other tests. The companies will use electronic laboratory reporting (ELR) to report results to jurisdictions, as outlined in [CDC reporting guidance](#). Test results will be reported to the health department in the patient's state or territory of residence.
- The addition of these commercial laboratories will greatly expand the current capacity provided through CDC's Laboratory Response Network (LRN), which has been testing about 10,000 specimens per week.
- Previously, all initial testing for monkeypox was being performed at LRN labs, located at most state health departments.
- If samples are positive for orthopoxvirus (the genus of viruses that includes monkeypox virus), the labs send samples to CDC to perform viral characterization testing to determine whether they are monkeypox.
- A positive orthopoxvirus test result is enough for public health authorities to take the actions necessary to care for the patient and help prevent additional spread – the same actions they would take for a positive monkeypox test result. They can isolate the patient, start treatment if needed, begin contact tracing, and offer post-exposure vaccination to contacts while characterization tests for monkeypox are under way.
- CDC has asked commercial laboratories to send positive samples to CDC for viral characterization testing as well.
- Providers can act on positive results from commercial laboratories before CDC performs testing.
- The LRN consists of approximately 120 laboratories, including state and local public health laboratories, and 84% of the U.S. population lives within 100 miles of one of these laboratories. Currently, 78 of these laboratories can test for orthopoxviruses.

IF YOU FEEL SICK

If you have a new or unexplained rash or other symptoms, see your healthcare provider for medical attention and evaluation.

- If you do not have a provider or health insurance, you can visit a public health clinic.
- If you seek medical evaluation for possible monkeypox, cover all parts of the rash with clothing, gloves or bandages, wear a well-fitting mask, and remind the healthcare provider that this virus is circulating.
- Avoid close contact, including sexual or intimate contact, with anyone until you have been evaluated by a healthcare provider.
- See CDC's [Social Gatherings, Safer Sex, and Monkeypox](#) page for additional information on how to reduce your risk of monkeypox.

If you have received a monkeypox diagnosis, avoid having close contact with others until your symptoms have gone away and the rash has healed completely. This includes:

- Avoiding sex or being intimate with anyone until all your sores have healed and you have a fresh layer of skin formed.
- Avoiding crowds.
- Avoiding contact with animals including pets, domestic animals, and wildlife. For more information, see CDC's [Pets in the Home](#) page.
- Covering rashes on the body with clothing, gloves, or bandages.
- Washing your hands often with soap and water. Use hand sanitizer if soap and water aren't available.
- [Cleaning and disinfecting](#) surfaces and materials that you have touched while you had symptoms, including bedding, towels, clothing, sex toys, and surfaces such as door handles or counter tops.
 - Standard household cleaning/disinfectants may be used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

TREATMENT

There is no treatment specifically for monkeypox. But because the monkeypox and smallpox viruses are closely related, drugs and vaccines developed to protect against smallpox may be used to prevent and treat monkeypox virus infections.

- Treatment will depend on how sick someone gets or whether they're likely to get severely ill, such as if they have a weakened immune system. Most people with monkeypox recover fully within 2 to 4 weeks without the need for treatment.
- Antiviral drugs used to treat smallpox and monkeypox require a prescription and must be released from the U.S. Strategic National Stockpile at the request of a patient's local or state health department.
- State and territorial health authorities can call the CDC Emergency Operations Center (770-488-7100) to ask for medical countermeasures for the treatment of monkeypox.
- The antiviral drug tecovirimat (also known as TPOXX) was developed to fight smallpox, but the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) allows CDC to use it to treat monkeypox during an outbreak.
- In addition, other drugs may be useful against monkeypox, but have not yet been tested:
 - Vaccinia Immune Globulin Intravenous (VIGIV) is licensed by FDA for treating complications from smallpox vaccination. CDC has permission to use of VIGIV for the treatment of orthopoxviruses, including monkeypox, during an outbreak.

- Cidofovir (also known as Vistide) is an antiviral medication approved by the FDA for the treatment of cytomegalovirus (CMV) retinitis in patients with Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS).
- Brincidofovir (also known as Tembexa) is an antiviral medication that was approved by the FDA in 2021 for the treatment of human smallpox disease.
- For more information, see <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/treatment.html>.

VACCINES

CDC believes that making vaccines available now is one important strategy to contain monkeypox. On June 28, the federal government announced a national strategy to vaccinate and protect people at risk for monkeypox, prioritize vaccines for areas with the highest numbers of cases, and provide guidance to state, tribal, local, and territorial health officials to aid their planning and response efforts.

- A substantial number of people with monkeypox diagnoses are reporting anonymous contacts, or contacts with people who cannot be identified for contact monitoring and consideration for post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP). As a result, CDC and partner agencies have been revising their strategy and expanding vaccine use as a priority to stop virus transmission.
- We believe that making vaccines available now is one important strategy to contain monkeypox. CDC and HHS are working closely with partners to ensure there are enough doses available to vaccinate all people for whom vaccination is recommended.
- Two smallpox vaccines licensed by the FDA are available to prevent monkeypox: JYNNEOS, also known as Imvamune or Imvanex, and ACAM2000.
- The National Strategy has two phases.
 - In the first phase, we will be using currently available vaccine stocks for people who have had close contact with people known to have monkeypox, and for people who may have had high-risk exposures in venues or areas where monkeypox is actively spreading.
 - In the second phase, when more JYNNEOS vaccine is available, broader vaccination of persons who may be at risk for future monkeypox exposure may be considered.

Available vaccines

- This plan allocates the two-dose [JYNNEOS](#) vaccine, which the FDA approved for protection against smallpox and monkeypox in people ages 18 years and older who are at high risk for monkeypox infection.
- [Because JYNNEOS is licensed as a two-dose series and the real-world vaccine effectiveness is unknown in the context of the current outbreak, CDC continues to recommend two doses of JYNNEOS vaccine to confer maximum protection against monkeypox infection.](#)
- To supplement the supply of JYNNEOS, state and local jurisdictions, tribal nations, and territories may also request an alternate vaccine, [ACAM2000](#). However, ACAM2000 carries greater risk of certain serious side effects than JYNNEOS and should not be given to some people, including people with weakened immune systems, certain skin conditions such as eczema, heart disease, or who are pregnant or lactating.
- CDC will work with state, territorial, tribal, and local health departments requesting the ACAM2000 vaccine to ensure that people who are considering getting the vaccine are fully informed on the benefits and the risks before they receive it.
- People who get vaccinated should continue to take steps to protect themselves from infection by avoiding close, skin-to-skin contact, including intimate contact, with someone who has monkeypox.

Who should get vaccinated during Phase I (Expanded Post-exposure Prophylaxis)?

- CDC is currently recommending the following people should be considered for expanded post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP++):
 - People who know that a sexual partner in the past 14 days received a monkeypox diagnosis
 - People who have had multiple sexual partners in the past 14 days in a jurisdiction with known monkeypox
- This may include:
 - Known contacts who are identified by public health via case investigation, contact tracing, and risk exposure assessments
 - People who are aware that one of their sexual partners from the past 2 weeks has received a monkeypox diagnosis.
 - Gay, bisexual, other men who have sex with men, and transgender people who report any of the following in the past 2 weeks:
 - Group sex or sex with multiple partners.
 - Sex at a commercial sex venue or in association with an event, venue, or defined geographic area where monkeypox transmission has been reported.
- JYNNEOS doses should be prioritized for those people who are at risk for severe adverse events with ACAM2000 or severe disease from monkeypox, such as people with HIV or other conditions or taking medications that weaken the immune system.

Distribution

- States are being offered equitable allocations of JYNNEOS vaccine doses based on current cases as well as the proportion of the population at risk for severe disease from monkeypox.
- The federal government is partnering with state, tribal, local, and territorial governments in deploying the vaccines.
- HHS has allocated 331,000 doses of JYNNEOS vaccine to date:
 - 56,000 doses that were made available in Phase 1.
 - [Another 275,000 doses were made available in Phases 2a and 2b.](#)
 - [More than 191,000 of those doses have been distributed.](#)
- HHS expects more than 750,000 additional JYNNEOS doses to be made available over the summer.
- [On July 1, the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Agency \(BARDA\) ordered an additional 2.5 million doses of JYNNEOS for use in responding to current or future monkeypox outbreaks and as part of U.S. smallpox preparedness. Deliveries from this latest order will begin arriving at the SNS later this year and will continue through early 2023. Altogether, HHS anticipates making approximately 1.9 million doses of JYNNEOS available in 2022, with an additional 2.2 million available during the first half of 2023.](#)
- In some areas, there may be more people with known or presumed exposures than supplies of JYNNEOS. States are encouraged to prioritize JYNNEOS for use in people who are at risk for severe adverse events with ACAM2000 (see below).
- When states have considered the complexities and elect to use ACAM2000 as part of their strategy, it can be offered to people who have been adequately screened and counseled.
- This may include ensuring vaccinees clearly understand possible health risks, have signed informed consent, have ensured they are not HIV positive through rapid testing, and are able to avoid close contact with people – including household members – at risk of severe disease until the vaccine site is fully healed.

What approaches to vaccination can states or other jurisdictions take?

- In the context of this outbreak:
 - **Monkeypox vaccine post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP)** refers to vaccination of a person following confirmed exposure to monkeypox. This is intended to help prevent illness from the monkeypox virus.
 - **Outbreak Response Monkeypox Vaccine Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP)++** refers to vaccination of people with certain risk factors that might make them more likely to have been recently exposed to monkeypox. The PEP++ approach aims to reach these individuals for vaccination even if they have not had a known exposure to monkeypox.
 - **Monkeypox vaccine pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP)** refers to vaccination given to people at high risk for monkeypox. Vaccination can protect them from becoming infected or minimize the seriousness of their symptoms if infection develops.
- To better understand the protective benefits and the risks associated with these vaccines in the current outbreak, CDC will collect data on any side effects, infections of vaccinated people, and whether the way the person was infected makes any difference in how well the vaccine protects them.

Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) and protection from previous vaccination:

- The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommends that people whose jobs may expose them to orthopoxviruses, such as monkeypox, get vaccinated with either ACAM2000 or JYNNEOS to protect them if they are exposed to one of these viruses.
- Most people in this category work in laboratories that handle monkeypox and other related viruses.
- Other people, such as healthcare workers who may be caring for people with monkeypox, also may be vaccinated.
- [CDC does not currently recommend pre-exposure vaccination for most U.S. healthcare workers. Monkeypox primarily spreads through close contact and does not spread as easily as diseases like COVID-19. Proper use of personal protective equipment and infection control practices are effective at reducing the risk of spread of the monkeypox virus when examining a patient or handling contaminated materials.](#)
- [Previous smallpox vaccination does provide protection, but it may not be lifelong. During the 2003 monkeypox outbreak and during the current outbreak, several people who were infected with monkeypox had previously been vaccinated against smallpox decades prior.](#)
- [In response to an outbreak, vaccines and other medical measures would also be given to eligible people who were previously vaccinated against smallpox. To date, ACIP has only considered vaccine recommendations for people at risk of exposure to orthopoxviruses, including monkeypox virus, as part of their jobs. As such, booster vaccination recommendations are also only applicable to these populations.](#)
- For more information, see www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/clinicians/smallpox-vaccine.html.

Vaccine safety:

- The Vaccine Adverse Reporting System (VAERS) is the nation's passive vaccine safety surveillance program that serves as a national early warning system by helping to detect unusual or unexpected reporting patterns of adverse events for vaccines.
- VAERS is co-managed by CDC and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). It can receive reports from anyone, including patients, parents, caregivers, and healthcare providers. Healthcare providers are required to report certain adverse events that occur after vaccination. VAERS is not designed to identify cause and effect. If an adverse event is reported to VAERS, that doesn't mean that the vaccine caused the adverse event. Instead, the system allows detection of potential safety concerns that might need further investigation.
- These adverse event reports are studied by vaccine safety experts who look for previously unobserved adverse events, or changes in patterns of reporting of adverse events after people receive a particular vaccine.

- When VAERS staff members investigate a report of a serious adverse event, they ask for the patient’s medical records related to the serious adverse event to learn more about what happened.
- If vaccine safety experts find an association between a serious adverse event and a vaccine, FDA and the vaccine manufacturer will work to find an appropriate solution to address the specific safety concern, and the public will be alerted.
- VAERS reports are available to the public but do not include any information that could identify the person.

PREVENTION

There are a number of measures that can be taken to prevent infection with monkeypox virus:

- Avoid close contact with people with [symptoms consistent with](#) monkeypox infection and items (such as clothing or linens) with which they have been in contact.
- Avoid contact with animals that could harbor the virus, including animals that are sick or that have been found dead in areas where monkeypox occurs.
- Avoid contact with any materials, such as bedding, that has been in contact with an animal that has been infected with monkeypox.
- Wash your hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer after contact with [animals or people known or suspected to have monkeypox infection or items they handled or used while ill](#).
- CDC has posted additional considerations for infection prevention and control in non-healthcare settings, including:
 - [Homes](#)
 - [Congregate living settings](#), such as dormitories, homeless shelters, or correctional facilities
 - [Disinfection instructions](#) for non-healthcare settings, such as homes and cars
- People should consult their local public health department for help implementing the recommended steps.
- Healthcare providers should use [standard and recommended isolation precautions](#) when caring for patients with suspected or confirmed monkeypox infection.
- We don't know whether condoms prevent the transmission of monkeypox. If rashes are confined to the genitals or anus, condoms may help. However, since infectious respiratory secretions may be present, condoms alone are probably not enough to prevent monkeypox.
- Condoms may help to prevent transmission of monkeypox by preventing contact with infectious rash and potentially infectious fluids. However, condom use for prevention of monkeypox has not been evaluated.
- Condoms are effective at preventing the transmission of some infections, such as chlamydia, gonorrhea, and HIV.
- Be aware that not all monkeypox rashes occur in areas that a condom can cover. Even when condoms are used, direct skin-to-skin contact with infectious rash, scabs, or body fluids not covered by a condom and face-to-face monkeypox transmission can occur.
- As public health experts learn more about monkeypox transmission, this information will be updated. Having multiple or anonymous sex partners may increase your chances of getting monkeypox. Limiting your number of sex partners may reduce the possibility of exposure.

REDUCING STIGMA AND MISINFORMATION

Reducing Stigma in Monkeypox Communication and Community Engagement: How CDC is Framing Communication Around Monkeypox

- Helping people make the best-informed decisions to protect their health and the health of their community from monkeypox requires a combination of providing key prevention information to the public and working with partners and trusted messengers to ensure information reaches affected communities.
- Anyone can get monkeypox, and [CDC is carefully monitoring for monkeypox](#) in the United States. We are working to provide frontline healthcare providers and public health officials with information about what monkeypox looks like and how to manage the illness. Many—though not all—of the reported cases have been among gay, bisexual, [or other men who have sex with men](#). Given this, we have put added emphasis on identifying and using specific channels that will directly reach gay and bisexual men - across racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and geographic backgrounds - with messages. In addition to these focused messaging activities, we are also messaging to a wider audience using broad language that focuses on the symptoms and the behaviors that can lead to transmission of monkeypox.
- How Partners can Help Message about Monkeypox
 - Partners can help by messaging to different communities and channels to increase awareness of monkeypox, while reducing the chances of stigmatizing those who may have contact with the virus or marginalizing groups who may be assumed to be at increased risk for monkeypox. Keeping messages fact-based can help reduce stigmatizing disproportionately affected populations.
 - As you're developing resources and messages, use [CDC's Health Equity Guiding Principles for Inclusive Communication](#).

○ For Messages to General Audiences:

- Promote messaging that provides information on what monkeypox is and how it is spread, and encourages health care seeking if experiencing symptoms related to monkeypox.
- Emphasize that *anyone* can get it and promote it as a public health concern for all. Focusing on cases among gay, bisexual, [or other men who have sex with men](#) when messaging to a broader audience may inadvertently stigmatize this population and create a false sense of safety among those who are not gay and bisexual men.
- When using imagery, show realistic images when depicting symptoms, not extreme cases. Include pictures of people from diverse backgrounds and racial/ethnic groups.

○ For Messages to Gay & Bisexual Men:

- It's important to reach the gay and bisexual community, or any disproportionately affected community, with non-alarmist, fact-based messaging about monkeypox that provides people with tools they can use to protect themselves and others.
- When focusing messages to gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men, use targeted channels that directly reach these audiences such as specific websites, dating apps or media programs.
- If trying to increase perceived relevance among specific groups, use relatable/personal stories that depict people "like me" (intended audience)
- Messaging and dissemination tactics may need to be adapted to reach the communities who need the information as we learn more about the current monkeypox outbreak.

- How Partners Can Disseminate Messages to Events
 - We encourage partners to reach out to organizers of upcoming local events to provide a situational awareness of monkeypox and offer information and messages to share. The following are some tips:
 - Conduct an environmental scan of upcoming, large-scale events in your community. Consider festivals where there may be spin-off or side events like dances and gatherings where people may have close, skin-to-skin contact with others.
 - Take an inventory of other venues where close, skin-to-skin contact can occur, such as massage parlors, spas, saunas, and sex clubs.
 - Engage trusted community-based organizations, community leaders, and community healthcare workers to connect with event organizers and affected communities.

- Have a clear call to action. This can include raising awareness by sharing information, asking people to seek healthcare if they experience a rash, or directing community members to local healthcare providers who can coordinate testing.
- Provide event organizers with information and materials such as:
 - Messages that can be used on websites and social media sites
 - Talking points that event organizers can use when talking with their customers or attendees
 - This letter, which organizers can download, adapt, and send to their attendees/customers
 - [Download Event Organizer Letter Template](#)
 - [Printed materials](#) that can be passed out at events and in venues
 - A point of contact if they have more questions or need information
- It will take partnerships between healthcare providers, affected individuals, and public health officials to ensure people who need care can access it and know how to protect their loved ones.
- For further information on communicating prevention information while reducing stigma, see CDC's [Reducing Stigma in Monkeypox Communication and Community Engagement](#) page.

Harm reduction approaches:

- When thinking about what to do, seek information from trusted sources like the local health department. Second, consider how much close, personal, skin-to-skin contact is likely to occur at the event you plan to attend. If you feel sick or have any rashes or sores, do not attend any gathering, and see a healthcare provider.
 - Festivals, events, and concerts where attendees are fully clothed and unlikely to share skin-to-skin contact are safer. However, attendees should be mindful of activities (like kissing) that might spread monkeypox.
 - A rave, party, or club where there is minimal clothing and where there is direct, personal, often skin-to-skin contact has some risk. Avoid any rashes or sores you see on others and consider minimizing skin-to-skin contact when possible.
 - Enclosed spaces, such as back rooms, saunas, or sex clubs, where there is minimal or no clothing and where intimate, often anonymous sexual contact occurs have a higher likelihood of spreading monkeypox.
 - Talk to your partner about any recent illness and be aware of new or unexplained sores or rashes on your body or your partner's body, including the genitals and anus. If you or your partner have recently been sick, currently feel sick, or have a new or an unexplained rash or sores, do not have sex and see a healthcare provider.
 - If you or a partner has monkeypox, the best way to protect yourself and others is to not have sex of any kind (oral, anal, vaginal) and not kiss or touch each other's bodies while you are sick, especially any rash or sores. Do not share things like towels, fetish gear, sex toys, and toothbrushes.
 - If you or your partner have (or think you might have) monkeypox and you decide to have sex, consider the following to reduce the chance of spreading the virus:
 - Have virtual sex with no in-person contact.
 - Masturbate together at a distance of at least 6 feet, without touching each other and without touching any rash or sores.

- Consider having sex with your clothes on or covering areas where rash or sores are present, reducing as much skin-to-skin contact as possible. If the rash is confined to the genitals or anus, condoms may help. However, condoms alone are likely not enough to prevent monkeypox.
- Avoid kissing.
- Remember to wash your hands, fetish gear, sex toys and any fabrics (bedding, towels, clothing) after having sex.
- Having multiple or anonymous sex partners may increase your chances of exposure to monkeypox. Limiting your number of sex partners may reduce the possibility of exposure.
- Avoid touching the rash. Touching the rash can spread it to other parts of the body and may delay healing.