

THE LATEST UPDATES ON MONKEYPOX

In August of 2022, the United States declared its monkeypox outbreak a national public health emergency. While monkeypox has shown to be less contagious than other viruses such as COVID-19 and has not led to any deaths in the country, residents are asked to take its risk seriously.

The **Town of Millbury** and the Central Massachusetts Regional Public Health Alliance is prioritizing treatment and prevention efforts for populations currently at most risk, with a particular focus on individuals with multiple sexual partners; those in repeated close contact with others, including sports teams; and those living in close quarters, such as in group housing and dorms. The Alliance is seeking to expand its access to vaccines, and residents will be notified as its capacity increases.

This page includes up-to-date information and resources from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) about how monkeypox spreads, precautions to take, and how to seek treatment.

What Is Monkeypox?

Monkeypox is a rare disease caused by infection with the monkeypox virus, which can make people sick. Symptoms may include a rash, resembling pimples or blisters, often preceded by flu-like illness. Overall illness typically lasts 2 – 4 weeks. While some people experience mild symptoms, others may experience severe pain.

How It Spreads

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

- Direct contact with rash, blisters, or scabs
- Contact with surfaces and objects—such as clothing, bedding, or towels—that have been used by an individual with monkeypox
- Prolonged contact with bodily fluids, such as through kissing

Monkeypox can be easily passed between sexual partners due to close skin contact, and any person, regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation, can acquire and spread it.

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.

[More on spread from the CDC.](#)

Symptoms

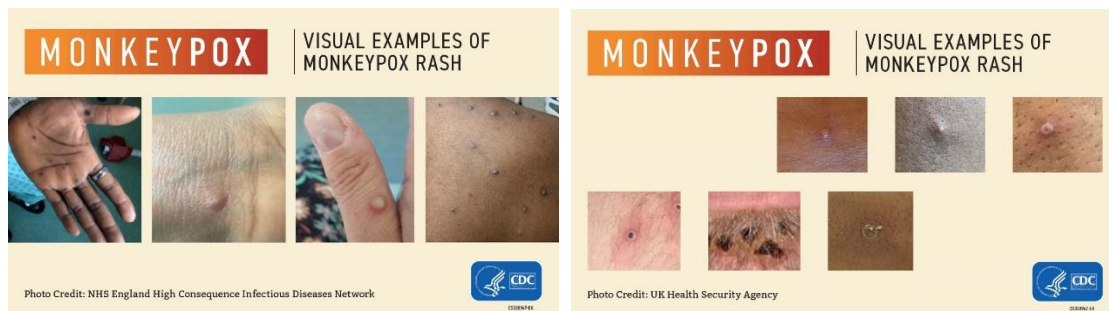
Symptoms of monkeypox infection typically appear within 3 weeks of exposure and can include:

- Fever
- Chills

- Swollen lymph nodes
- Exhaustion
- Muscle aches and backache
- Headache
- Respiratory symptoms (e.g., sore throat, nasal congestion, or cough)

Rash blisters appear 1 – 4 days later and can be located on or near the genitals or anus, as well as other areas like the hands, feet, chest, face, or mouth. They can itch and be painful to the touch. The blisters will go through several stages before scabbing, falling off, and healing.

[More on signs and symptoms from the CDC.](#)



Prevention

The CDC recommends the following steps to protect yourself from getting monkeypox:

1. Avoid close, skin-to-skin contact with people who have a rash that looks like monkeypox.
2. Avoid contact with objects and materials that a person with monkeypox has used.
3. Wash your hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, especially before eating or touching your face and after you use the bathroom.

The CDC also recommends vaccination for people who have been exposed to monkeypox and people who may be more likely to get monkeypox, which includes:

- People who have been identified by public health officials as a contact of someone with monkeypox
- People who are aware that one of their sexual partners in the past 2 weeks has been diagnosed with monkeypox
- People who had multiple sexual partners in the past 2 weeks in an area with known monkeypox
- People whose jobs may expose them to orthopoxviruses

Currently, the nearest location for high-risk individuals to contact for a vaccine appointment is [AIDS Project Worcester](#) (508-755-3773 x113). However, due to severely limited supply, availability is currently low.

Additional details on vaccine eligibility and other locations in Massachusetts offering appointments can be found on the [MDPH website](#).

[More on prevention, including how to lower your risk during sex and at social gatherings, from the CDC.](#)

Treatment

Health officials advise any resident who suspects they have been infected to contact their healthcare provider as soon as possible and to avoid skin-to-skin contact with others until being examined. They should also [alert anyone](#) they may have been in close physical contact with about potential exposure. Anyone with monkeypox is urged to follow the [CDC's isolation guidelines](#).

While there is no current treatment specifically for monkeypox, antiviral drugs such as tecovirimat (TPOXX), may be recommended for people who are more likely to get severely ill, like patients with weakened immune systems.

Additional Resources

For additional information and the latest updates related to monkeypox, please visit mass.gov/monkeypox or cdc.gov/monkeypox.

More from the CDC:

- [Reducing Stigma in Monkeypox Communication and Community Engagement | Monkeypox | Poxvirus | CDC](#)
- [What You Need to Know about Monkeypox if You are a Teen or Young Adult \(cdc.gov\)](#)
- [Monkeypox and Safer Sex \(cdc.gov\)](#)
- [Videos | Monkeypox | Poxvirus | CDC](#)
- [Graphics | Monkeypox | Poxvirus | CDC](#)