



CURRENT INFORMATION

Monkeypox

Germany and many other countries registered cases of monkeypox for the first time in May 2022. People diagnosed with monkeypox should not be blamed for the disease. No person or group of people should be stigmatized because of a disease. If you are concerned about symptoms that could indicate a monkeypox infection, please contact your health care provider to receive appropriate care.

WHAT IS MONKEYPOX?

Monkeypox is caused by the monkeypox virus (also called MPXV). Most people experience a mild course of disease, which usually heals on its own. However, in some cases, a severe disease course may occur (especially in children or individuals with a weakened immune system).

HOW IS MONKEYPOX PASSED ON TO OTHERS?

- ▶ Close skin-to-skin contact during sex or close hugging, massages, or kissing a person with monkeypox, especially in case of contact with the rash, sores or scabs
- ▶ Contact with objects used during sex (e.g. sex toys)
- ▶ Contact with fabric (e.g. clothing, bedding or towels) and surfaces that have been used or touched by a person with monkeypox
- ▶ Contact with droplets when having close face-to-face conversations

People with monkeypox can pass on the virus to others as soon as they have symptoms. Close skin-to-skin contact is currently thought to be the main way that the infection is passed on to others.

Only once all changes to the skin, including the scabs, have healed and a new layer of skin is formed, there is no further risk of passing on the infection. This may take several weeks.

MONKEYPOX SYMPTOMS

- ▶ Symptoms can occur within 5 to 21 days after contact with a person with monkeypox. Based on current data, incubation times of 2 to 4 days seem possible in some cases.

Changes to the skin

- A rash that can look like pimples, sores or blisters in the genital or anal area,
 - and it can also appear in other areas, such as the hands, feet, chest, face or mouth.
- ▶ The skin lesions can be very painful.
 - ▶ Monkeypox is often preceded or accompanied by general signs and symptoms of illness.

General signs and symptoms of illness

- Fever, headache, muscle aches, back pain,
 - swollen lymph nodes,
 - chills or fatigue.
- ▶ However, some people with monkeypox do not experience any general signs and symptoms of illness.

For images of typical monkeypox changes to the skin see:

www.rki.de/affenpocken-bilder





REDUCING THE RISK OF INFECTION ...

... WHEN HAVING SEX.

- ▶ You can reduce your risk of getting infected with monkeypox through **reducing your number of sexual partners**.
- ▶ **Condoms can reduce the risk of infection** by preventing direct contact especially with mucosal lesions in the anus or vagina. Evidence suggests that the monkeypox virus might also be present in the semen. However, condoms do **not protect** against transmission **if you come in contact with changes to the skin on other parts of the body**.
- ▶ If you or your partner have **monkeypox**, you should **avoid having sex** of any kind (oral, anal, vaginal) as well as avoid touching and kissing.
- ▶ **After recovery from monkeypox** and once all changes to your skin have completely healed, you should **use condoms during sex for a period of eight weeks** since the monkeypox virus could still be present in the semen for some time.

... AT PARTIES, CLUBS OR FESTIVALS.

- ▶ The likelihood of passing on monkeypox is strongly increased through **sexual contact**. This can also apply to places such as darkrooms, saunas or sex clubs, **where people often wear little or no clothing**.
- ▶ There can also be an **increased risk of infection** at festivals, parties, events or clubs, **where often little clothing is worn and where direct skin contact frequently happens**.
- ▶ You should **not touch the rashes, blisters or sores** and you should **minimize skin-to-skin contact**.

VACCINATION AGAINST MONKEYPOX

- A **smallpox vaccine** has been approved in the EU, which can also be used for protection against monkeypox.
- The vaccination is most effective if given as a **preventive measure**.
- **Even after contact** with a person with monkeypox, vaccination soon after can reduce the risk of becoming sick. This so-called **post-exposure vaccination** should ideally be administered within four days after the contact took place.
- For **further information**, please contact your **health care provider**.
- Information on monkeypox vaccination:
www.rki.de/affenpocken-impfung (in German).

WHAT TO DO ...

... IF YOU SUSPECT YOU HAVE CONTRACTED MONKEYPOX?

- ▶ If you feel sick, watch out for **sores, blisters or rashes** on the body, including around your genital area or anus.
- ▶ Until you have been diagnosed, **avoid meeting other people**, especially if this involves close skin contact.
- ▶ **Avoid having sex and see a health care provider** (general practitioner, HIV specialist, dermatologist or a local public health authorities' HIV/STI test center). Before your visit, inform them by phone that you think you might have a monkeypox infection.

... IF YOU OR YOUR PARTNER ARE INFECTED WITH MONKEYPOX?

- ▶ Practice **good hand hygiene**. Wash your hands with soap and water.
- ▶ Stay in **isolation** and **avoid close body contact** until scabs and crusts have healed completely and have fallen off and no new changes to your skin appear – at least for a **minimum of 21 days**.
- ▶ **Look out for symptoms** and regularly check your skin, including areas that are not easily visible.
- ▶ **Avoid contact with pets**, as they may also be able to get infected with the monkeypox virus.
- ▶ **Inform people** with whom you have had close physical contact since the start of your symptoms that they may be at **risk of having been exposed to monkeypox**.
- ▶ For further information, see the leaflet "Home-based Isolation for Confirmed Monkeypox Infection":
www.rki.de/affenpocken-isolierung (in German)

FURTHER INFORMATION

ROBERT KOCH-INSTITUT

www.rki.de/affenpocken
www.rki.de/affenpocken-kontaktpersonen
www.rki.de/affenpocken-isolierung
www.rki.de/desinfektion



FEDERAL CENTRE FOR HEALTH EDUCATION

<https://bzga-k.de/affenpocken>



GERMAN AIDS SERVICE ORGANIZATION

www.aidshilfe.de/affenpocken

