

# Monkeypox Recommendations

## for Two-Spirit, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (2SGBTQ+) Communities



BC Centre for Disease Control  
Provincial Health Services Authority

Vancouver  
CoastalHealth



- Since May 2022, an outbreak of a disease called monkeypox has been taking place in many countries where it doesn't normally happen.
- Most of these recent cases are happening through close contacts between men who identify as having sex with other men.
- Any person who has close contact with a monkeypox case could catch it.

Stigmatizing people because of a disease is **NEVER** okay. Anyone can get or pass on monkeypox, regardless of their sexuality.

### What should the 2SGBTQ+ community do?



**Be aware –**  
Know the symptoms of a monkeypox infection.



**Watch for symptoms –**  
Look for new ulcers or blisters on your body.



**See a doctor or nurse –**  
If you have symptoms, seek help.

**Find a clinic**

### Symptoms of monkeypox infection



Symptoms can last 2-4 weeks



Infection may start with flu-like symptoms, like:



- Fever or chills
- Swollen lymph nodes
- Intense headaches



- Muscle aches
- Back pain
- Fatigue



**1-5 days later a skin rash appears,**

with blisters that can appear on genitals, hands, feet and/or mouth. The rash may start in one place and spread to other parts of the body.

**Some people only get the rash.**

### How monkeypox is spread

Monkeypox is not known to infect people through sex, like syphilis or HIV. However, for most people, sexual activity involves close contact, and that's how monkeypox is spread.

Monkeypox can spread from one person to another through **CLOSE, PROLONGED CONTACT** with:



Sores and blisters



Items like bedding or towels that have monkeypox virus on them



Respiratory droplets such as coughs and sneezes during close, face-to-face contact over several hours

## Protecting yourself and others

If you develop symptoms, visit your doctor or a clinic. A health provider can take a look and see if you need testing. Tell them ahead of time that you think you might have monkeypox.

**Until you see a doctor or a nurse, follow these ways to avoid spreading monkeypox to others:**



**Wear a mask.**



**Do not share towels, clothing, sheets, or other things that have touched your skin.**



**Don't get close to others, including people you live with. Do not have sexual contact with others.**



**Clean your hands, and objects and surfaces that you touch regularly.**



**Keep any sores or blisters covered as much as possible (e.g. wear long sleeves and long pants).**

- In BC, public health staff contact all people who have possible and confirmed cases of monkeypox, along with people who have been in close contact with them.
- Public health provides information about ways to stop the spread of monkeypox.
- A vaccine that helps protect against monkeypox may be recommended by public health for people who are found to be at higher risk of infection.

**If you have been in close contact with a person with a monkeypox infection, monitor for symptoms.**

**SYMPTOMS CAN START 5<sup>to</sup> 21 DAYS AFTER YOU WERE IN CONTACT.**

## Can monkeypox be treated?

- Most people with monkeypox have mild symptoms which will go away after 2-4 weeks and do not require any specific treatment.
- Treatment for monkeypox is usually to try to control symptoms (e.g. fever, dehydration, any other infections that could develop).
- See your healthcare provider or go to your nearest Urgent Primary Care Centre or Emergency Department if you have monkeypox and experience the following:
  - Worsening or new throat or rectal pain
  - Severe fever or chills
  - Shortness of breath or chest pain
  - New pox lesions on multiple parts of your body

## Who may be more at risk of severe disease?

- People who are moderately or severely immunocompromised (e.g. people living with HIV who are not on treatment and have high viral loads or low CD4+ counts)
- Young children
- People who are pregnant

## Why are many cases in this global outbreak among men in 2SGBTQ+ communities?

Viruses like monkeypox spread through contact in social networks. Some 2SGBTQ+ men are part of social networks that cross countries. This includes travel to large gatherings which may have helped the monkeypox virus to spread. Many men in these networks are active in protecting their health, including getting tested for sexually transmitted infections (STIs). This may have led to earlier detection of the outbreak in 2SGBTQ+ communities, and outbreaks may also be found in other communities.



### For more information

Information on monkeypox is changing as we learn more. For up-to-date information visit [bccdc.ca/monkeypox](https://bccdc.ca/monkeypox)