

# What is Monkeypox? A New Global Health Emergency



Monkeypox, or Mpox, was first reported in Central Africa in 1970 and is clinically similar to smallpox, but epidemiologically distinct. It is caused by the Orthopox virus of the Poxviridae family. Monkeypox spreads first from animal to human and then human to human through close contact and can be transmitted through fomites such as clothing, bedding, and furniture surfaces. It is also transmitted from an infected animal to humans through bites or scratches.

As of June 2024, It is estimated that the multicountry monkeypox outbreak has resulted in 99,176 cases, as confirmed by laboratory tests.

## **Signs and Symptoms of Monkeypox**

Monkeypox presents with a range of signs and symptoms, typically within a week of exposure but may occur as late as 21 days later. The duration of symptoms is usually 2 to 4 weeks, although in individuals with a weakened immune system, it may extend beyond this period. Common symptoms of monkeypox are:

- fever
- intense headache
- back pain
- myalgia (muscle ache)
- intense asthenia (lack of energy)
- Lymphadenopathy (the swelling of lymph nodes).

The second period is skin eruption, which is characterized by the appearance of:

- Various stages of the eruption occur on the face), on the palms of the hands, soles of the feet, and on the body nearly simultaneously.
- In approximately ten days, the rash evolves from maculopapular (lesions with a flat base) to vesicle (small fluid-filled blisters) to pustules (bulging patches of skin).

Symptoms of monkeypox usually last from 14 days to 21 days, monkeypox can be diagnosed definitively by laboratory testing.

### **Prevention**

During the monkeypox outbreaks, close contact with other patients represents the most significant risk factor for infection with the monkeypox virus. In the absence of a specific treatment or a vaccine for monkeypox, the most effective means of reducing infection in individuals is by raising awareness of the risk factors and educating people about the measures they can take to reduce their exposure to the virus. People with monkeypox should isolate at home following guidance from their health care provider, or in hospital if needed, for the duration of the infectious period. Covering lesions and wearing a well-fitting mask when in the presence of others may help prevent spread.

### **Source:**

World Health Organization. Monkeypox = Orthopoxvirose simienne. 2011

World Health Organization. Human Monkeypox. 1972

World Health Organization. Monkeypox: the consequences of neglect. 2022