

What's going on with **MONKEYPOX**

There have been monkeypox cases identified in several countries throughout Europe. Although anyone can become infected with monkeypox, men who have sex with men are currently the most affected group. To date, most of the cases in Europe have been fairly mild, and only few have required hospitalisation. However, some individuals are more at risk for severe outcomes, including those who are immunocompromised, pregnant women and young children.

How is monkeypox transmitted?

Monkeypox needs close physical contact (skin-to-skin), including during sex, to be transmitted. It can also spread through respiratory droplets in prolonged face-to-face contact, and through contaminated objects.

What should I do if I think I have it?

If you have any of the symptoms, seek medical advice. Take a break from visiting events and gatherings, and avoid having close contact, including sex, until you have sought the advice of a health provider and know that you are well. To confirm a monkeypox infection, individuals need to be assessed by a health professional and tested for the virus.

What do I do if I test positive for monkeypox?

If you are diagnosed with monkeypox, you can reduce the risk of passing the virus on by avoiding close contact with others, including sex. Self-isolate, and follow the advice given to you by your healthcare provider and local health authorities. As a precaution and because of current uncertainties about transmission, wear a condom for 12 weeks even after you have fully recovered.

What are the symptoms?

Monkeypox can take the form of rashes, spots, ulcers, or blisters anywhere on the body, but often in the genital area if spread during sex. It may also cause inflammation and pain in the rectum, fever, swollen lymph nodes, headaches, muscle aches and low energy. Symptoms are usually mild to moderate, but some vulnerable groups may have severe symptoms.

How can I stay safe?

Participating in outdoor events and festivals alone does not put you at greater risk of contracting monkeypox infection, it is your behaviour that matters. So enjoy your summer safely! Remember that close physical contact, including sex, may increase your risk of exposure. Having multiple and frequent sexual contacts, including with anonymous partners, may put you more at risk of infection of monkeypox. To protect yourself practice safer sex. Be aware of common symptoms and seek care early if you or a recent partner have any of those mentioned above. If you experience symptoms, take a break from participating in events until you have been checked by a healthcare professional.

