



Public health advice on monkeypox for gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men

Updated 18 July 2022

An outbreak of a viral infection called monkeypox is currently being reported in countries that have not previously had cases. Anyone who has close

We know that this outbreak is concerning, especially for people who are unwell, their partners, families and communities. Learning

How to use this document:

The advice in this document is intended for use by individuals, community leaders, influencers,

EPI-WIN webinar: How is Monkeypox spreading? What we know so far Engaging with newly affected communities

Andy Seale, Adviser

WHO Global HIV, Hepatitis and STIs Programmes

Check [who.int](https://www.who.int) for the most up to date information.

What you need to know about monkeypox:

Which communities are currently affected?

Monkeypox is affecting different communities including:

Diverse communities of all ages and backgrounds in **previously affected West and Central Africa** and more recently in more than 60 countries that have not previously had cases

Most cases in countries not previously affected appear to be concentrated at present among **some gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men** who have had recent sexual contact with a new partner or partners

The risk of monkeypox in newly affected countries is not limited to men who have had recent sex with other men and **a limited number of cases have also been reported in children and women**

Anyone who has close physical contact with someone infectious could become infected

Data tells us that **sexual activity has played a role in transmitting monkeypox in recent months** - some men who have sex with men are connected to sexual networks that extend across different cities and countries

Health authorities are working closely with affected communities, including broader LGBTQI+ communities, to closely monitor, and effectively respond to, the situation

Affected communities have responded quickly and thoughtfully to the outbreak – often drawing directly on learning from the response to HIV

Opportunity to draw on decades of experience in supporting people living with HIV and addressing HIV-related stigma and discrimination – these experiences are especially helpful to a successful approach to monkeypox

Understand how the virus can be spread – stick to the facts and avoid speculation

An outbreak of a viral infection is currently being reported in a country that has not previously had cases. A contact with someone who has the virus. Cases have been identified among bisexual and other men who have had recent sexual partner or partners; but the virus can also spread to other groups.

Information

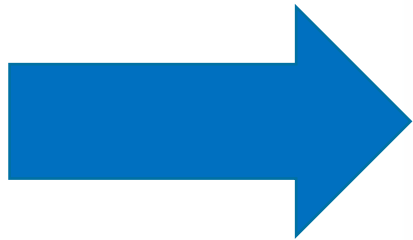
Monkeypox is spread through **close physical contact** with someone with the virus

Direct skin-to-skin contact with monkeypox rash, sores, or scabs can readily spread monkeypox including during sex

Kissing and mouth to body contact can also spread the virus

Transmission is also possible through **contact with fabrics** that have been used by someone with monkeypox, for example towels, clothing and bed sheets

Reinforce, support
and amplify
advice targeting
affected
communities



Stay calm and learn more about how monkeypox is affecting your community
Avoid sexual contact if you feel you may be infected – even if you have not yet had a confirmatory test
Isolate at home and talk to a health worker if you have symptoms or if you have been identified as a possible contact of someone with monkeypox
Provide emotional and practical support to any friends or family members who may be asked to self isolate
Reach out for help and support if you are asked to isolate – don't attempt this on your own
Combat misinformation by sharing only reliable, evidence based and non-stigmatizing information from trustworthy sources

Challenge stigma and discrimination – including stigma related to men who have sex with men and African people



Public health
bisexual

An outbreak of a viral infection is currently being reported in several countries that not previously had cases. The virus is spread by contact with someone who has the virus. Cases have been identified in bisexual and other men who have had recent sexual contact with a partner or partners; but there are also cases in these groups.

Information &

Stereotyping, stigmatizing, blaming or shaming people is harmful

Anyone can get or pass on monkeypox

Stigma is highly **counterproductive** and stops people from accessing services

Monkeypox is **nothing to be ashamed of**

PRESS RELEASE

UNAIDS warns that stigmatizing language on Monkeypox jeopardises public health

GENEVA, 22 May 2022—UNAIDS has expressed concern that some public reporting and commentary on Monkeypox has used language and imagery, particularly portrayals of LGBTI and African people, that reinforce homophobic and racist stereotypes and exacerbate stigma. Lessons from the AIDS response show that stigma and blame directed at certain groups of people can rapidly undermine outbreak response.

Support those infected



- Having **monkeypox** can be **distressing** for the person affected and those around them.
- **If someone discloses to you that they have monkeypox, react without being judgmental or making any assumptions about how they have become infected.**
- **Respect their wishes** as to whether they want other people to know about their illness or not.
- Do all you can to **help those self-isolating**, including doing their shopping and checking in with them regularly.
- **Some people may struggle financially** if they are unable to work during their isolation period; consider setting up support systems in whatever way you can in your community, if this is the case.



Public health advice on monkeypox for gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men

Updated 18 July 2022

Outbreak of a viral infection called monkeypox is currently being reported in countries that have not previously reported cases. Anyone who has close contact with someone who is infectious is at risk. Cases have been identified in communities of gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men who have had recent sexual contact with a new partner or partners; but the risk is not limited to these groups.

We know that this outbreak is concerning, especially for people who are unwell, their partners, families and communities. Learning more about monkeypox can help people protect themselves and help stop its onward spread to others. Know your risk to lower your risk.

How to use this document:
The advice in this document is intended for use by individuals, community leaders, influencers, health workers and others affected by or working on the monkeypox outbreak. It contains information to help people reduce their risk of monkeypox and to help slow the spread of the virus.

Information about monkeypox is evolving rapidly. Advice may change as we learn more. Check [who.int](https://www.who.int) for the most up to date information.

What you need to know about monkeypox

Giving people an opportunity to talk about their concerns and feelings can help.

More and more people are sharing their experiences of infection to help break down the stigma and feelings of shame that can arise.

Join calls for equitable urgent access to vaccines, antivirals and other services



The current outbreak has drawn attention to monkeypox which has received relatively little attention in the countries that have been previously affected




While there is a vaccine for monkeypox recently approved by some countries, supplies are limited

Some countries may also hold smallpox vaccine products and antivirals which could be considered for use according to national guidance – they may be available in limited quantities through national authorities, depending on the country

Advocacy pressure is required to ensure that vaccines, antivirals and other essential services are made available in all communities as a matter of urgency – **faith leaders can join affected communities in a call for enhanced urgent access**



Benjamin Ryan ✓
@benryanwriter

 Breaking: Biden administration announces mass [#monkeypox](#) vaccination plan. The US will release supplies of Jynneos vaccine (which requires 2 doses 4 weeks apart): 56,000 doses immediately; 240,000 doses in the coming weeks; 750,000 by summer's end; 500,000 in the fall.  

1:00 AM · Jun 29, 2022 · Twitter Web App

Representatives working with MSM communities from the Strategic Advisory Group on HIV, viral hepatitis and sexually transmitted infections (STAC-HHS) and other key partners

WHO HQ informal community reference groups brings together community leaders and experts from all WHO regions (including several with global level responsibilities) and has met four times since May with a focus on:

- Updates and intelligence sharing on epidemic and response
- Advice to WHO HQ approach – including on community engagement and communication approaches and tools
- Networking and exchanging across countries and regions

MSM representatives from previously affected as well as newly affected countries are part of the group

Key feedback and priorities from reference group

- Sense that the response requires greater urgency
- Appreciation for the space and opportunity provided by WHO
- Recognition that communities are:
 - health literate, proactive around managing sexual health and well organized
- Appropriately funded communities are central to managing/responding to the outbreak – critical that moving forward community contributions are planned, costed and funded
- While support in addressing stigma and discrimination is welcome - clear expectation that engagement and collaboration expands beyond RCCE to the broader response
- Urgent focus on ensuring access to testing and vaccines supported by trained health workers
- Identification of **following community priorities**:
 - Urgent support to testing and vaccines access through advocacy and/or operational support
 - Health worker support and training
 - Guidance and social protection support/advocacy for people self-isolating
 - Recognition and strategies to recognize financial loss and hardship for sex workers
 - Stigma and discrimination approaches informed by context – including through a focus on tracking and reacting to online misinformation and support to public health officials and health workers

Value of sharing experiences of MPX infection



➤ Note that increasingly people are sharing their experiences of infection to help break down the stigma and feelings of shame that can arise.



Harun has spoken about his experience with Monkeypox which led to him being hospitalized (image removed)
<https://twitter.com/HarunTokunay/status/1543571437352820033>



Matt Ford, 30, from Los Angeles, contracted Monkeypox in June
MATT FORD
<https://www.newsweek.com/i-have-monkeypox-what-it-really-like-1722153>