



What you should know about Monkeypox

Monkeypox is not a new infection. It has been infecting people in western Africa for many years. There have been occasional cases in other parts of the world usually brought home by someone who was visiting the one of the countries where it is known. What is different now is that it seems to be spreading to more people in other parts of the world. People living in Maryland and in the District of Columbia have been diagnosed with monkeypox, so we all need to be on the alert. One important thing to know is that it is not as contagious as COVID-19 and none of the scientists or doctors are expecting a monkeypox pandemic but, it is an infection, and we all have a role in keeping it from spreading at all.

What are the symptoms of monkeypox?

It starts like many other infections with body aches, fever, fatigue, and you can have sore throat, cough, and swollen glands. Around the second or third day, a rash develops starting around the face and head and then it quickly spreads all over the body including palms of the hands and soles of the feet. The rash is a vesicular rash meaning it looks like little blisters like chickenpox or even herpes. The blisters turn cloudy and eventually scab over. It takes about 2 - 3 weeks for the whole process until the scabs heal up.

How does it spread?

It can spread if you are in close contact with someone for several hours who is coughing, from exchanging body fluids, from mother to child in the womb and most unusual and important to know - it can spread from direct contact with the fluid of a blister. This includes fluid from blanket, bed sheets and other shared items. It does not spread by casual contact - you cannot catch it standing next to someone in line at the store.

What do I do if I think I have it?

Call your primary care provider or use [eVisit](#) for instructions. There are lab tests to prove you have it. If you are told to go to a health care site, be it office or emergency room, please tell them right away that you think you have monkeypox, so that the staff can take the appropriate steps. You should also keep yourself away from others in your house immediately just in case - and don't forget about clothing and bedding.



MedStar Family Choice

Most people get a mild case of monkeypox and recover completely. For people with weakened immune systems (on medications, cancer chemotherapy, transplant recipients and others) and young children, it can get severe. There are medications to treat those who get a severe infection.



**It's how we
treat people.**