

## **Frequently asked questions:**

### **What should I do if I think I have monkeypox?**

If you have symptoms or have been a close contact of someone with monkeypox, contact a health worker for advice, testing and medical care. Self-isolate where possible while waiting for a test and avoid close contact with others. Mention to your health care provider that you think your symptoms could be monkeypox or that you have been exposed.

### **What should I do if I test positive for monkeypox?**

If you do test positive for monkeypox, you will need to isolate from others until your rash has crusted over, the scabs have fallen off and a new layer of skin has grown underneath. This will help protect anyone else from becoming infected.

Your health care provider will give you advice on how to take care of yourself and whether you should recover at home or in hospital. Keep hydrated, eat well and get enough sleep. Use medication for pain and fever if needed. Take care of your rash: avoid scratching; keep lesions dry and uncovered; clean rash with sterilized water/antiseptic; rinse lesions in your mouth with saltwater and take warm baths with baking soda/Epsom salts. If your symptoms get worse, contact your health worker immediately for advice.

If you have had close contact (including sex) with anyone in the previous 21 days, consider telling them about your diagnosis so that they can be alert to symptoms. Health workers might be able to help you pass on the information anonymously if you do not feel able to do so.

### **What do we know about monkeypox and sex?**

Monkeypox can spread through close contact of any kind, including through kissing, touching, oral and penetrative vaginal or anal sex with someone who is infectious. Anyone with new and unusual rashes should avoid sexual contact until they have had been checked for sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and monkeypox. Remember that the rash can also be found in places that can be hard to see, including the mouth, throat, genitals, vagina and anus/anal area.

The monkeypox virus has been found in bodily fluids such as semen. Since it is currently unknown whether monkeypox can be spread through semen or vaginal fluids, people who have recovered from monkeypox are advised to use condoms when having all forms of sex for 12 weeks following recovery of monkeypox infection. Wearing a condom won't protect you from catching monkeypox while you are showing symptoms, but it will help protect you and others from a range of other STIs.

When possible, exchange contact details with any new sexual partners, even those you were not planning to see again. This way, you can get notified if your partner develops any monkeypox symptoms, or you can notify them if it happens to you. Reducing your number of sexual partners may reduce your risk.

## **How can I safely support someone with monkeypox?**

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 someone who is self-isolating, including helping with 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.

Giving people an opportunity to talk about their concerns and feelings can help. Encourage them to take care of their mental health, to eat well, stay hydrated and exercise if possible. More and more people are sharing their experiences online to help reduce stigma and feelings of shame that can arise.