

Dance/USA

Task Force on Dancer Health

Monkeypox: How does this affect me? What do I need to know?

What is Monkeypox?

Monkeypox is a virus similar to smallpox. It presents with a rash and fluid-filled pustules, often accompanied by flu-like symptoms (fever, aches, back pain, headache, swollen lymph nodes, fatigue).

- Symptoms may not appear until UP TO 3 weeks after exposure
- Illness typically lasts 2-4 weeks, but isolation may require up to six weeks until all pustules and rashes have completely resolved
- The infection may be extremely painful, being compared to “broken shards of glass under the skin”
- An individual may present with ONLY a rash (not accompanied by flu-like symptoms)
- Monkeypox is rarely fatal



How does monkeypox spread?

Monkeypox appears to be primarily transmitted through prolonged (10-15 minutes) skin-to-skin contact (hugging, kissing, sex, or other intimate contact). Transmission via respiratory droplets (cough, sneeze), bodily fluids, or contact with hard or soft surfaces is also possible, though currently thought to be less likely.

- An individual is considered infectious beginning 5 days prior to the rash OR at first symptoms of illness AND until all lesions have completely healed
- It is unknown whether transmission is possible prior to the appearance of symptoms
- As of now, the exact length of time of skin-to-skin and/or face-to-face contact likely to result in transmission is unclear

Who gets monkeypox?

Current cases in the U.S. are primarily men who have sex with men. However, due to the various methods of transmission, ANYONE can be infected with monkeypox.

What do I do if I think I have monkeypox?

- If you have a fever or any other flu-like symptom, isolate yourself from others, and do not go to work. Consult a healthcare provider for testing as soon as possible.
- You may be infected even if you don't think you came into contact with someone who has monkeypox.
- ANY pimple, sore, pustule, or bump should be cleaned, covered, and evaluated by a healthcare professional. Monkeypox bumps usually have a hard "shell" that cannot be popped like a typical pimple or whitehead.
- Testing involves a provider taking a swab of a sore. While you are waiting for your test result, which can take a few days, isolate yourself from others.

Can I get monkeypox from dancing, partnering, and sweating?

It is possible to contract monkeypox through prolonged, direct contact with the sores or rash of someone who has the virus. Thought to be less likely, infection may be possible through contact with clothing and other items used by a person with monkeypox or prolonged face-to-face contact with an infected person. Wearing a mask and keeping skin covered with long-sleeved clothing and pants may be protective.

How do I reduce my risk of contracting monkeypox?

- Educate yourself and others about symptoms and presentation to help with early recognition
- Monitor self and close contacts for any potential signs and symptoms
- Avoid multiple sexual and intimate partners
- Utilize safer sex practices
- Clean and cover any sores, wounds, pimples, or pustules
- Avoid sharing linens, towels, and clothing

- Clean surfaces (barre, bedding, linens, and clothing) frequently
- Wash hands frequently
- Wear a mask
- Wear long-sleeves and pants when partnering
- Get vaccinated when available

Costumes

Ideally, costumes that are shared should be cleaned after each use, which is not always feasible. This underscores the importance of education and individuals with symptoms isolating themselves. There is currently no information regarding whether spraying vodka or other cleaning solutions will kill the virus on fabrics.

Treatment

Contact your healthcare provider if you think you might have monkeypox or have been exposed to monkeypox. Antiviral drugs and vaccines developed for smallpox are being used to treat monkeypox. Associated pain and flu-like symptoms can be managed with medications.

Vaccination

The JYNNEOS vaccine has been approved in the U.S. for the prevention of monkeypox and smallpox. Experts believe the vaccine can help protect people against monkeypox when given before exposure to the virus, reduce the risk of infection if given within four days after exposure, and reduce the risk of serious illness if given within 14 days after exposure. Two doses are recommended, at least 4 weeks apart.

Currently, supplies are limited, so certain patient populations are being prioritized based on geographical region. Contact your healthcare provider and/or your local health department for vaccine eligibility information. You may be eligible if you are in a high-risk category (people with autoimmune diseases, men who have sex with men, and healthcare workers at high risk for contact with patients with monkeypox).

I've had monkeypox and I feel better. When can I go back to work?

Remain in isolation for the duration of illness, which typically lasts two to four weeks. You can return to work when ALL symptoms have resolved and all sores and rashes are fully healed (fresh layer of skin visible). Refer to your healthcare provider for further guidance.

Addendum 8/15/22: Asymptomatic or presymptomatic spread may occur. Vaccination should not be limited to people with known exposure. <https://www.eurekalert.org/news-releases/961883>

Resources

www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox

<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/monkeypox>

www.nyc.gov/health/monkeypox

“Monkeypox: What you need to know.” Webinar sponsored by the Entertainment Community Fund, August 10, 2022.

Disclaimer: The information on monkeypox contained in this paper is intended to help guide and inform the dancer. It is not meant to take the place of the advice of a medical professional. This information is provided by Dance/USA Task Force on Dancer Health.

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