

What is monkeypox?

Monkeypox is a rare viral disease that occurs mostly in animals but can affect exposed humans. It is reported mainly in central and western Africa, particularly in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It was first identified in 1958 in laboratory monkeys, and has been found in blood tests of other African animals such as squirrels, rats, mice, and rabbits. Monkeypox was reported in humans for the first time in 1970.

Is there monkeypox in the United States?

In early June 2003, monkeypox was reported among several people in the United States. These people were infected after having contact with wild or exotic mammalian pets imported to the United States for commercial purposes. Investigations confirmed that contact with infected prairie dogs that had been housed or transported with a shipment of African rodents imported from Ghana caused these infections. This was the outbreak of monkeypox reported in the United States.

What causes monkeypox?

The disease is caused by *Monkeypox virus*. It belongs to a group of viruses that includes the smallpox virus (variola), the virus used in the smallpox vaccine (vaccinia), and the cowpox virus.

What are the signs and symptoms of monkeypox?

In humans, the signs and symptoms of monkeypox are similar to smallpox, but usually milder. Approximately 12 days after exposure, symptoms of fever, headache, backache, muscle aches and extreme tiredness occur. Swelling of the lymph nodes also occurs with monkeypox. One to three days (or longer) after the fever starts, a rash begins. This rash develops into raised bumps filled with fluid. The bumps progress to become crusts and scabs before they fall off.

How long does monkeypox last?

The illness typically lasts two to four weeks.

How do you catch monkeypox?

People can get monkeypox from an animal with monkeypox if they are bitten or if they touch the animal's blood, body fluids, or its rash. The disease can also spread from person to person through large respiratory droplets during periods of three or more hours of face-to-face contact within six feet of a contagious person, or by touching body fluids of a sick person or their contaminated bedding or clothing.

Can you die from monkeypox?

In Africa, monkeypox has killed between one and ten percent of people who get it. In the United States, where good nutrition and access to medical care are more likely, the risk is considered to be lower.

How do you treat monkeypox?

There is no specific treatment for monkeypox other than supportive care to prevent complications.

What can people who have been exposed to monkeypox do to protect themselves?

In Africa, people who had previously received the smallpox vaccine had a lower risk of monkeypox. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) developed guidelines explaining when smallpox vaccine should be used to protect against monkeypox. When a case of monkeypox has been confirmed, the investigators, veterinarians, animal control workers and healthcare personnel involved may be advised to receive the smallpox vaccine. In such an occurrence, the recommendations will be provided through the Oklahoma State Department of Health and CDC.

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