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ADVOCATING FOR CARIBBEAN LGBTQ VOICES IN NYC

MPV "MONKEYPOX"

An Education, Treatment, and Vaccine Resource Guide

On Thursday, August 4, 2022, "monkeypox" was declared a National Public Health Emergency.

HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

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An Education, Treatment, and Vaccine Resource Guide

Using the term “monkeypox” can perpetuate racism and harmful racialized discrimination, which disproportionately impacts Black people, POC communities, and LGBTQ+ people. The Caribbean Equality Project’s resource guide will refer to the “monkeypox” virus as MPV to dismantle medical trauma and center racial justice as we educate and protect community members.

What is MPV

MPV is a disease that can make you sick, including a rash, which may look like pimples or blisters, often with an earlier flu-like illness. While the current outbreak in New York City has high rates of known cases among gay, bisexual men, men who have sex with men (MSM), transgender, and non-binary people, this virus is not limited by gender or sexuality. ***It can spread to anyone and anywhere, through close, personal, often skin-to-skin contact.***

MPV is a disease caused by the "monkeypox" virus, which is in the same family as smallpox, although much less severe. Its name is characterized by the pox illness that occurs upon infection, leading to an outbreak of lesions spreading from the face to the rest of the body, including the genital areas.



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MPV History

MPV was first discovered in 1958 in a research monkey facility. MPV is a part of the same family of viruses as the variola virus, the virus that causes smallpox. MPV symptoms are similar to smallpox symptoms but milder, and monkeypox is rarely fatal. Despite being named “monkeypox,” the source of the disease remains unknown.

Human MPV was first identified in 1970 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in a 9-month-old boy. Since 1970, human cases of MPV have been reported in 11 African countries. Since 2017, Nigeria has experienced a large outbreak, with over 500 suspected cases and over 200 confirmed cases and a case fatality ratio of approximately 3%. Cases continue to be reported daily.



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MPV History

In 2003, the first MPV outbreak outside of Africa was in the United States and was linked to contact with infected pet prairie dogs. This outbreak led to over 70 cases of MPV in the U.S. MPV has also been reported in travelers from Nigeria to Israel in September 2018, to the United Kingdom in September 2018, December 2019, May 2021, and May 2022, to Singapore in May 2019, and to the United States of America in July and November 2021. The first case of MPV in 2022 was reported on May 7 in the United Kingdom and was linked to an individual who had recently traveled from Nigeria.

The current outbreak has known cases in Europe, Africa, and the Americas. The first case in the U.S. was reported on May 18, 2022. **MPV Cases in NYC are increasing, and there are likely many more cases that have not been diagnosed.**



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How Does It Spread

In the current outbreak, MPV is spreading mainly during oral, anal, and vaginal sex and via other intimate activities such as rimming, hugging, kissing, biting, cuddling, and massages. **The illness typically lasts 2-4 weeks.**

The virus can spread through:

- Direct contact with a rash or sores of someone who has the virus
- Contact with clothing, bedding, and other items used by a person with MPV
- Prolonged face-to-face contact

Experts are currently studying whether the virus can also spread through semen, saliva, feces, and other body fluids.



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Symptoms and Treatment

Rash or lesions will typically begin to appear in 1-3 days after the initial fever, "often beginning on the face then spreading to other parts of the body." However, be aware of skin rashes or lesions that may be isolated to one part of your body, and if you note any unexpected or unexplained changes, see a healthcare provider.

The CDC notes that MPV begins with:

- Fever
- Headache
- Muscle aches
- Backache
- Swollen lymph nodes
- Chills
- Exhaustion

There is no specific treatment approved for MPV. Most people get better on their own without treatment. Talking to your healthcare provider will help you determine if you are eligible for antiviral treatment.



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How To Best Prevent MPV

- **Avoid skin-to-skin contact:** Sharing direct and personal skin-to-skin contact should be avoided, and there is a higher likelihood of contracting MPV at events hosted in enclosed spaces where people can be expected to have minimal to no clothing. Large outdoor events where people are fully clothed offer you more safety by minimizing your risk of exposure through skin-to-skin contact.
- **Sex:** Think carefully and deeply about sexual activity and how/if to have sex. Do not participate in any intimate activities if you have flu-like symptoms or have developed any unusual rashes or lesions on your body.
- **Hand washing:** Practice good hand washing, especially after encountering a person with MPV.



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How To Best Prevent MPV

- **Avoid infected surfaces** with unwashed materials and objects that have had direct contact with an MPV-infected person. The virus can be spread through prolonged respiratory secretions or contact with a lesion or rash, not only person-to-person but through contaminated objects that have not been properly cleaned.
- **Mask up:** Masks are encouraged to help prevent the spread of respiratory droplets in situations with face-to-face contact.
- **Isolate:** Quarantine yourself from others if you have become exposed to or infected with MPV. Avoid contact with those who have the infection.
- **Talk with your health care provider:** Health officials recommend talking to your healthcare provider about getting the smallpox vaccine within two weeks of exposure to someone diagnosed with MPV.



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How To Best Prevent MPV

The best way to protect yourself from MPV is to avoid sex and other intimate contacts with multiple or anonymous partners.

If you choose to have sex or other intimate contacts, the following can help reduce your risk:

- Reduce your number of partners, especially those you do not know or whose recent sexual history you do not know.
- Ask your partners if they have MPV symptoms or feel sick. If you or your partners are sick, especially if you or they have a new or unexpected rash or sore, do not have sex or close physical contact.
- Avoid sex parties, circuit parties, and other spaces where people are having sex and other intimate contacts with multiple people.



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How To Best Prevent MPV

- Cover all rashes and sores with clothing or sealed bandages if you choose to have sex or other intimate contact while sick. This may reduce the spread from contact with the rash or sores, but other transmission methods may still be possible.
- Since it may be possible that the virus can be transmitted through semen, use latex condoms during sex.
- Do not share towels, clothing, fetish gear, sex toys, or toothbrushes.
- Wash your hands, fetish gear, and bedding. Sex toys should be washed after each use or sex act.

People can spread the virus when they have symptoms. Experts are studying whether the virus can spread before symptoms start or after they end.



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Vaccination

Eligible New Yorkers who may have been recently exposed to MPV can get the JYNNEOS vaccine.

Vaccination is free and available regardless of immigration status.

Getting vaccinated after a recent exposure may reduce the chance of you getting MPV, and it can reduce symptoms if you do get it.

People should get two doses, at least four weeks apart.

The JYNNEOS vaccine is recommended for people ages 18 and older at high risk for MPV infection. At this time, people who had MPV during this outbreak are not recommended to get vaccinated.



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Vaccine Eligibility

Eligibility for MPV vaccination may change as the outbreak evolves and is based on vaccine supply.

People who meet all of the following conditions can now be vaccinated:

- Gay, bisexual, men who have sex with men (MSM), and/or transgender, gender non-conforming, or gender non-binary
- Age 18 or older
- Have had multiple or anonymous sex partners in the last 14 days

People who have been informed by the NYC Health Department that they are in close contact with someone with MPV should also get vaccinated.



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Vaccine Eligibility

If you are eligible to be vaccinated, you should especially consider getting vaccinated if:

- Your partners are showing symptoms of MPV, such as a rash or sores.
- You met recent partners through online applications or social media platforms (such as Grindr, Tinder, or Scruff) or at clubs, raves, sex parties, saunas, or other large gatherings.
- You have a condition that may increase your risk for severe disease if infected with the MPV virus, such as HIV or another condition that weakens your immune system, or you have a history of atopic dermatitis or eczema.

Even after getting vaccinated, you should still take precautions, especially if you are at high risk for severe illness from MPV.



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How To Get Vaccinated

Schedule an appointment online here:

- <https://vax4nyc.nyc.gov/patient/s/monkeypox>

To schedule an appointment by phone:

- Call 877-VAX-4NYC or 877-829-4692

Assistance for people with disabilities:

People with disabilities can get help making a vaccination appointment at an accessible site, traveling to their appointment, and getting their vaccine. People with disabilities can select their reasonable accommodations online, or if they need help making an appointment because of a disability, they can **call** 877-VAX-4NYC or 877-829-4692 or **email** hubaccess@health.nyc.gov.



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How To Get Vaccinated

Free transportation is available if you are either over the age of 65 or have a disability, and you:

- Cannot use public transportation
- Cannot use private transportation
- Cannot rely on friends or family members for transport

There are several programs available to facilitate transportation to a vaccination site:

- People with Access-A-Ride access can contact them at (877) 337-2017.
- People with Medicaid-provided transportation can use their usual contact number to schedule transport. Alternatively, they can call (844) 666-6270.



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Resources

Sign up for alerts about monkeypox appointments by texting MONKEYPOX (or MONKEYPOXESP for Spanish) to 692-692.

To learn more about the monkeypox virus, visit:

- **NYC Health** <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/health/health-topics/monkeypox.page>
- **World Health Organization** <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/monkeypox>
- **Human Rights Campaign**
<https://www.hrc.org/resources/monkeypox-and-what-you-need-to-know>
- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**
<https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/index.html>



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