



Government of Sierra Leone

National One Health Risk Communication and Community Engagement Pillar

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MONKEYPOX GENERAL MESSAGES

Risky behaviors that increase the risk of Monkeypox infection in people includes:

Having multiple sexual partners, especially those with genital lesions, including MSM (moderate risk); mass gatherings can substantially increase this risk. Having contact with infected bodily fluids or sleeping in the same room/bed with an infected person.

ABOUT MONKEYPOX

Monkeypox is a disease found in animals like rats, monkeys, and squirrels, that can spread to people. Once a person is infected with monkeypox it can spread from person to person.

Monkeypox is caused by *Monkeypox virus*, a virus closely related to smallpox.

Monkeypox is treatable and usually goes away on its own after 2-4 weeks, but it can be severe, causing even death especially for children, pregnant women, and those with other health conditions like hypertension, diabetes, Chronic kidney and liver disease, Asthma and Cancer etc.

The monkeypox virus is like human smallpox, a disease that has been eradicated in the 1980s. Although monkeypox is much milder than smallpox, it can be deadly. The monkeypox virus is mostly transmitted to people from various wild animals such as rats, monkeys, and squirrels. Normally, death from monkeypox outbreaks occurs between 1 and 10 in every 100 infected people, with most deaths occurring in younger age groups. Treating symptoms is the most effective way of managing the disease.

INCUBATION PERIOD

The time from when monkeypox enters a person's body to when the person starts to show signs and symptoms usually range between 5 to 21 days.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF MONKEYPOX

Common symptoms of monkeypox are:

- Fever, headache, muscle aches, and exhaustion and swollen lymph nodes and a skin rash or wounds.
- Wounds are often present on the palms of the hands and soles of the feet, and usually appear 1-3 days after the fever.
- They usually appear first on the face before spreading to other parts of the body.
- Sores can appear in the mouth or genital areas.
- The rash moves through different stages over 2 to 4 weeks before it dries up and falls off.
- Swelling of lymph nodes is a symptom that distinguishes monkeypox from other diseases that cause wounds like chickenpox and measles.

In Countries with the current outbreak, some people have displayed unusual signs and symptoms that are different from the usual pattern. These include:

- Only having a few or even just one wound.
- Wounds that begin in the genital or perineal/ perianal area and do not spread further across the body.
- Appearance of the wounds/rash before the appearance of other signs and symptoms like fever.
- Wounds/rash appearing at different stages of development.
- Fever, intense headache, swelling of the lymph node, back pain, muscle ache and lack of energy.
- The skin eruption period (within 1-3 days after appearance of fever) in which the various stages of the rash appear often beginning on the face and then spreading elsewhere on the body. The face (in 95% of cases), and palms of the hands and soles of the feet (in 75% of cases) are most affected.

TRANSMISSION OF MONKEYPOX

Infection of index cases results from direct:

- contact with the blood, bodily fluids, or cutaneous or mucosal wounds of infected animals
- Handling of infected monkeys, rats, and squirrels being the most likely reservoir of the virus.
- Eating not properly cooked meat of infected animals is a possible risk factor.
- Close contact with infected respiratory tract secretions, skin wounds of an infected person or objects recently contaminated by patient fluids or wound materials.

- Transmission occurs primarily via droplet from sneezing, coughing, usually prolonged FACE-TO-FACE contact, which puts household members of active cases at greater risk of infection.
- Transmission can also occur by inoculation or via the placenta (congenital monkeypox).
- A bite or scratch from an infected animal.
- Bush meat preparation or handling of an infected animal of monkeypox.
- Direct contact with the body fluids or wounds of an infected animal.
- Use of products made from monkeypox infected animals e.g. fat, skin, blood or fluid of infected animals.
- Once a person has monkeypox, they can spread it to others for the entire time that they have symptoms (usually 2-4 weeks).
- Monkeypox is spread from person to person by direct contact with rash/wounds of a person that has monkeypox.
- The body fluids (saliva, snot, urine, feces, blood, birthing fluids) of a person infected with monkeypox.

WHO IS MOST AT RISK OF A MONKEYPOX INFECTION?

People most likely to get monkeypox are people that:

- Hunt, kill, capture, handle, butcher, and prepare carriers of monkeypox such as squirrels, rats and monkeys.
- Those that care for someone who is sick with monkeypox without correct use of personal protective equipment and infection prevention protocols including health workers and those that may provide care at home.
- Those that have close interaction with those who are sick with monkeypox like household members and sexual partners (including commercial sex workers).
- Those that work in laboratories.
- Monkeypox can be particularly serious for children, pregnant women, and those that may be weak due to other health conditions.
- In countries with the current outbreak, those that have many sexual partners and/ or frequent unidentified sexual partners (including men who have sex with men) are at higher risk of infection.
- Even though some people may be more at risk than others, it is important that we all remember that anyone, anywhere can get monkeypox and that there is still much that we do not yet know

SEEK EARLY TREATMENT AT A HEALTH FACILITY IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW HAS COME INTO CONTACT WITH MONKEYPOX OR HAVE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF MONKEYPOX

- If you come in contact with a dead animal, go to the nearest health facility, Community Health Volunteer, Community Health Assistant, or Community Health Service Supervisor right away.
 - Getting early treatment for monkeypox can save lives.
 - When someone gets early care and treatment, they have a better chance at recovering quickly and with fewer problems.
- If you have signs and symptoms of monkeypox, make sure to go to your nearest health facility. and tell them if you have had recent contact with any animal or spent time in an area where animals live, visit, or are kept.
 - This information can help health officials act early before any sickness becomes a problem.
- If a person gets sick or dies after contact with an animal, go to the nearest health facility or call 117.
- Report all deaths of animals to a Veterinary Officer, Community Animal Health Worker, or Agriculture Extension Officer or call 117.
 - Reporting every death helps community health workers to know about the death and to decide if any investigation is needed.

