

# Groundswell

Out of homelessness



## Monkeypox

### What you need to know and how to stay safe

July 2022

ENGLISH VERSION

#### How do people catch it?

In the UK, monkeypox is spread from person to person through close contact such as:

- touching clothing, bedding, towels or eating utensils used by someone with the monkeypox rash
- touching monkeypox skin blisters or scabs (including during sex)
- coughs or sneezes.

#### What is monkeypox?

Monkeypox is a rare infection that has recently spread to a small number of people in the UK. Anyone can get monkeypox, and currently the risk of catching it is low.

It is called 'monkeypox' because the virus was first found in a group of monkeys in the 1950s. The source of the disease is unknown.

#### The first symptoms are:

- a high temperature
- a headache
- muscle aches
- backache
- swollen glands
- shivering (chills)
- exhaustion.

A rash usually appears 1 to 5 days after the first symptoms. It often begins on the face, then spreads to other parts of the body including genitals. The rash develops into small blisters which later become scabs.

#### What happens if you have it?

On average, the symptoms of monkeypox usually begin 6-16 days after being exposed to the virus.

Monkeypox is usually mild and most people recover in a few weeks without treatment. As the infection spreads through close contact, it's important to isolate if you have it to keep others safe.

Some people who have a higher risk of getting seriously ill (for example, if they have a weakened immune system) may need specialist hospital treatment until they recover.

The risk of dying is very low.

## What do I do if I think I have it?

If you have monkeypox symptoms, help and advice on what to do next is available.

Wear a well-fitting surgical face mask (the blue disposable ones available from most shops) if you may come into contact with others, and avoid close contact with other people as far as possible, until you have been told what to do.

### 1. Get medical advice by either:

- contacting a sexual health clinic and tell the person you speak to you have monkeypox symptoms. You can find your nearest clinic by searching online for 'find a sexual health clinic' or visiting [nhs.uk/service-search/sexual-health/find-a-sexual-health-clinic](https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/sexual-health/find-a-sexual-health-clinic)
- calling 111
- or calling your GP. Avoid attending in person to keep others safe.

2. If medical advice is not possible and you are in touch with a support worker or support service, ask them for advice. Call them if you can, or wear a surgical face mask and stand 3 steps away, to avoid close contact and stay safe.

## How can I keep myself and others safe?

- Wash your hands with soap and water regularly or use a hand sanitiser.
- Try to avoid sharing items such as clothes, bedding, towels and eating utensils.
- If you're around someone who has a rash, blisters or suspected monkeypox:
  - wear a surgical face mask
  - stand 3 steps away if possible
  - don't touch the person's rash or blisters
  - avoid close contact such as hugging, kissing or having sex.

## More information

- NHS information: search 'NHS monkeypox'.
- The Government's information website: search 'Monkeypox Gov UK'.
- If you do not have access to the internet but have access to a support service or support worker, you could ask them to print this information off for you.



At Groundswell we believe everyone has the right to good health. Two thirds of our staff and all our volunteers have experience of homelessness and help put together our health information and guidance, such as this leaflet.

We produce up-to-date health guidance for people experiencing homelessness, giving people the information they need to make informed decisions about their health.

**Monkeypox: what you need to know and how to stay safe.** English version.