

## Monkeypox

Monkeypox is a rare infectious virus that **does not** spread easily but there are a small number of cases in the UK which you may have heard about through the media.

Monkeypox is usually associated with travel to West Africa. It is usually a mild self-limiting illness, spread by very close contact [**including sexual contact**] with someone with Monkeypox and most people recover within a few weeks

The risk to the UK population is low. However, recent cases are predominantly in gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men (MSM).

We are advising MSM to be alert to any unusual rashes or lesions on any part of their body, especially their genitalia, and to contact NHS 111 if they have relevant symptoms or their local sexual health service if they have relevant symptoms and are also at risk of STIs (i.e., recently had a new sexual partner).

### Symptoms

- A rash can develop, often beginning on the face, then spreading to other parts of the body including the genitals.
- Fever
- Muscle aches
- Chills and exhaustion
- Headaches
- Swollen lymph nodes

The rash changes and goes through different stages, and can look like chickenpox or syphilis, before finally forming a scab, which later falls off.

These are some photos of what the rash/spots may look like:



a) early vesicle,  
3mm diameter



b) small pustule,  
2mm diameter



c) umbilicated pustule,  
3-4mm diameter



d) ulcerated lesion,  
5mm diameter



e) crusting of a mature  
lesion



f) partially removed  
scab

### **Actions you can take:**

If you think you have Monkeypox symptoms and are from a known current at-risk group (i.e., MSM)

- Avoid close personal or sexual contact with others until you know that this is not Monkeypox.
- Contact NHS 111 immediately and your enquiry will be treated sensitively and confidentially
- You can also contact your local sexual health service for advice over the phone especially if at risk of STIs from a new sexual partner.
- Do not attend any clinic face to face without speaking to a clinician first over the phone.

If you have any other queries regarding Monkey Pox, please call the national helpline on **0333 2423 672** (8am-6pm Mon-Fri and 9am-1pm Sat-Sun.)