

## Monkeypox

The College is closely monitoring local, regional, and national public health reports regarding the global outbreak of monkeypox. In our continued efforts to maintain and enhance the health and well-being within our community, we encourage everyone to familiarize themselves with the basic facts about monkeypox and to take steps to prevent its spread. We will keep this page updated as more resources and information become available.

Appointments to discuss concerns regarding monkeypox are available in the Springfield College Health Center by appointment by calling (413) 748-3175. Testing is available when appropriate.

### What is monkeypox?

Monkeypox is a rare disease caused by infection with the monkeypox virus. Monkeypox virus is part of the same family of viruses as variola virus, the virus that causes smallpox. Monkeypox symptoms are similar to smallpox symptoms, but milder. Monkeypox is rarely fatal. Monkeypox is not related to chickenpox.

Monkeypox can be acquired by **ALL** people, regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation.

### What are the symptoms of monkeypox?

Symptoms of monkeypox can include:

- Fever
- Headache
- Muscle aches and backache
- Swollen lymph nodes
- Chills
- Respiratory symptoms (e.g., sore throat, nasal congestion, or cough)
- A rash that can look like pimples or blisters that appears on the face, inside the mouth, and on other parts of the body, like the hands, feet, chest, genitals, or anus.
  - The rash goes through different stages before healing completely. The illness typically lasts 2-4 weeks.

Sometimes, people get a rash first, followed by other symptoms. Others only experience a rash.

### How is monkeypox spread?

A person with monkeypox can spread it to others from the time symptoms start until the rash has fully healed and a fresh layer of skin has formed. The illness typically lasts 2–4 weeks.

Monkeypox is spread through:

- Direct contact with an infectious rash, scabs, or bodily fluids,
- Respiratory secretions during prolonged, face-to-face contact, or during intimate physical contact, such as kissing, cuddling, or sex,
- Touching objects or fabrics (clothing, towels, bedsheets, or other linen) that previously touched the rash or bodily fluids of someone with monkeypox, or
- Being scratched or bitten by an infected animal.

Monkeypox is **NOT** spread through:

- Casual conversations, or
- Walking by someone with monkeypox.

Scientists are still researching:

- If the virus can be spread when someone has no symptoms.
- How often monkeypox is spread through respiratory secretions, or when a person with monkeypox symptoms might be more likely to spread the virus through respiratory secretions.
- Whether monkeypox can be spread through semen, vaginal fluids, urine, or feces.

### **How can you reduce your risk for monkeypox and prevent spread?**

- Avoid close contact (skin-to-skin, cuddling, and all sexual contact) with people who are sick or have a rash.
- Do not handle or touch the bedding, towels, or clothing of a person with monkeypox.
- Limit the number of sexual and intimate contact partners. Before becoming intimate, discuss your health with partners.
- Avoid gatherings where people wear minimal clothing and have direct, intimate, skin-to-skin contact.
- Be mindful of activities (kissing, sharing drinks, or eating utensils) that might increase the risk of spreading monkeypox.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Learn more from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): [Safer sex, social gatherings, and Monkeypox](#)

### **Are vaccines available for monkeypox?**

When properly administered before or soon after exposure, vaccines can help protect against monkeypox illness. The vaccine most commonly used for preventing monkeypox infection is JYNNEOS (also known as Imvamune or Imvanex) which has been licensed by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Supplies of the monkeypox vaccine are currently limited, both locally and nationally. To learn more about eligibility and availability of the vaccine, visit the Massachusetts Department of Public Health website: [MDPH Monkeypox Vaccine Information](#).

### **What should I do if I have symptoms or am exposed?**

If you are experiencing symptoms or have been exposed to someone with monkeypox, please call the Springfield College Health Center staff at (413) 748-3175 or email [healthcenter@springfield.edu](mailto:healthcenter@springfield.edu). The Health Center staff can help answer any questions you may have, and when medically appropriate, testing is available in the Health Center. If the Health Center is closed your primary care provider, local urgent care, or emergency room can provide medical guidance.

While awaiting medical guidance:

- Avoid close physical contact and gatherings, including sexual contact.
- If you have a rash, keep it covered.
- Wear a mask when around others.

If you contract monkeypox, the Health Center staff will help coordinate treatment and supportive care for your illness. This includes facilitating isolation plans. Students will be encouraged to return home to isolate, when possible. If you have been exposed, but do not test positive, you do **NOT** need to quarantine.

### **Where can I learn more?**

For more information about monkeypox, including signs and symptoms, prevention and treatment, please [visit the MDPH website](#) or [the CDC website](#).

Springfield College Health Center  
Hours: Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
(413) 748-3175  
[healthcenter@springfield.edu](mailto:healthcenter@springfield.edu)

For after hour emergencies, contact Public Safety: (413) 748-5555.

