

A small outbreak of monkeypox in the United States has led to several recent Chicagoland cases. Here's what you need to know.

? How is monkeypox spread?

Through close personal contact with someone with monkeypox, often **skin-to-skin** or **face-to-face** contact. They may have a rash, sores, pimples, blisters, or flu-like illness. Monkeypox can spread during sex, hugging, massage, kissing, or even by touching objects, (sex toys), fabrics (clothing, bedding, or towels), or surfaces touched by someone with monkeypox.

? What are the symptoms?

Monkeypox symptoms usually start within two weeks of exposure. First symptoms may include **flu-like symptoms**, such as fever, headaches, muscle aches, backaches, swollen lymph nodes, chills, or exhaustion. **Rash or sores** may appear all over the body or near certain areas like genitals, anus, hands, feet, chest, or face. These sores can look like pimples or blisters and may be painful or itchy. They can be inside the body, including mouth, anus, or vagina.

? Who is at risk?

Anyone can get monkeypox. A lot of close contact with other people - skin-to-skin or face-to-face - can increase your risk. You can lower your risk by limiting your direct physical contact, wearing long sleeved clothing, or keeping a little distance between yourself and others in crowded situations.

? What should I do?

IF YOU FEEL SICK OR HAVE ANY RASH OR SORES, separate from others immediately, do not attend any gathering, and call to make an appointment to see a health care provider.

- Events are safer when people are fully clothed and not much skin-to-skin or face-to-face contact occurs.
- Raves, circuit parties, or clubs where people show more skin and more touching occurs could be riskier.
- Avoid touching any rashes, sores, pimples, or blisters on others.
- Be aware that kissing could spread monkeypox.
- Wash your hands, sex toys, towels, and bedding before and after sex or other close physical contact.
- Call your health care provider right away if you have symptoms. If you don't have a doctor, call the **IDPH Hotline at 800-243-2437** to find a free health clinic near you.