

Monkeypox Virus Fact Sheet

1. What is Monkeypox? - Monkeypox is a rare viral disease that occurs mainly in the rain forest countries of central and West Africa. The disease was first discovered in laboratory monkeys in 1958. Blood tests of animals in Africa later found evidence of Monkeypox infection in a number of African rodents, and the virus was recovered from an African squirrel. Laboratory studies showed that the virus can also infect mice, rats, and rabbits. In 1970, Monkeypox was reported in humans for the first time. In June 2003, it was inadvertently imported into the United States in a shipment of exotic African rodents, resulting in transfer of the virus to prairie dogs with subsequent transmission to humans.

2. What is the cause of Monkeypox? - Monkeypox is caused by *Monkeypox virus*, which belongs to the Orthopoxvirus group of viruses. Other Orthopoxviruses that cause infections in humans include variola (smallpox), vaccinia (used for smallpox vaccine), and cowpox viruses.

3. What are the clinical features of Monkeypox? - In humans, Monkeypox is similar to smallpox, although it is usually milder. Unlike smallpox, Monkeypox causes lymph nodes to swell (lymphadenopathy). The incubation period for Monkeypox is about 12 days (range 7 to 17 days). The illness begins with fever, headache, muscle aches, backache, swollen lymph nodes, a general feeling of discomfort, and exhaustion. Within 1 to 3 days (sometimes longer) after the appearance of fever, the patient develops a papular rash (i.e., raised fluid-filled bumps), often first on the face but sometimes initially on other parts of the body. The lesions usually develop through several stages before crusting and falling off.

4. How long does Monkeypox last? - The illness typically lasts for 2 to 4 weeks.

5. Is Monkeypox fatal? - Studies of human Monkeypox in rural central and West Africa – where people live in remote areas and are medically underserved – have reported case-fatality ratios of 1% to 10%.

6. How do people get Monkeypox? - Monkeypox can spread to humans from an infected animal through an animal bite or direct contact with the animal's lesions or body fluids. The disease also can be spread from person to person, although it is much less infectious than smallpox. The virus is thought to be transmitted by respiratory droplets during direct and prolonged face-to-face contact. In addition, it is possible Monkeypox can be spread by direct contact with body fluids of an infected person or with virus-contaminated objects, such as bedding or clothing.

7. Is there a treatment or vaccine for Monkeypox? - Currently, there is no proven, safe treatment for Monkeypox. Smallpox vaccine has been reported to reduce the risk of Monkeypox among previously vaccinated persons in Africa. Persons investigating Monkeypox outbreaks or caring for infected individuals or animals should receive a smallpox vaccination to protect against Monkeypox. Persons who have had close or intimate contact with individuals or animals confirmed to have Monkeypox should also be vaccinated. These persons can be vaccinated up to 14 days after exposure.

8. For more information about Monkeypox:

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/monkeypox/index.htm>

This fact sheet provides general information. Please contact your physician and/or veterinarian for specific clinical information related to you or your animal.

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