An outbreak of a disease called monkeypox is currently taking place in many countries that do not typically have cases. This can be concerning, especially for people whose loved ones or a community that have been affected. Some cases have been identified through sexual health clinics in communities of gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men.

Monkeypox is spread by close skin-to-skin contact, including sexual intercourse, which includes kissing, touching, oral sex, and anal and vaginal sex with someone who has skin lesions caused by monkeypox.

However, it is important to note that the risk of monkeypox is not limited to men who have sex with men.

Anyone who has close contact with someone who has symptoms or skin lesions is at risk. However, given that the virus is being identified in these communities, learning about monkeypox, how it spreads and how to protect yourself will help ensure that as few people as possible are affected and that the outbreak can be stopped.

How to use this document:
This document contains information on how monkeypox spreads, what to do if you think you have symptoms and how to protect yourself and others. It can be used by community leaders, influencers, health workers and people attending social events, gay pride parades, and parties to inform and engage communities of gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men.

Information on this outbreak is changing rapidly as we learn more.
Check paho.org for the most up to date information.

Public health advice for gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men on the recent outbreak of monkeypox

An outbreak of a disease called monkeypox is happening in some countries where the virus is not typically found. Some of these cases are being found in communities of gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men. Transgender people and gender-diverse people may also be more vulnerable in the context of the current outbreak.

Symptoms include:
- Rash with blisters on genitals, mouth, face, hands, feet, eyes.
- Fever.
- Proctitis or inflammation of the rectum that causes discomfort and/or discharge.
- Swollen lymph nodes.
- Headaches.
- Muscle aches.
- Low energy.

You can catch monkeypox if you have close physical contact with someone who is showing symptoms. This includes touching and being face-to-face.

Monkeypox can spread through close skin-to-skin contact during sex, including kissing, touching, oral and penetrative sex with someone who has symptoms. Avoid having close contact with anyone who has symptoms.

Protect yourself and others by:
- Isolating at home and talking to a health worker if you have symptoms.
- Avoid skin-to-skin or face-to-face contact, including sexual contact with anyone who has symptoms.
- Clean hands, objects, and surfaces that have been touched regularly.
- Wear a mask if you are in close contact with someone with symptoms.
Stigmatising people because of a disease is **NEVER** ok.
Anyone can get or pass on monkeypox, regardless of their sexuality.
and detergent. Wear a mask when handling any clothes or bedding. Clean and disinfect any contaminated surfaces and dispose of contaminated waste (e.g., dressings) appropriately.

**Some cases in this outbreak have been identified among communities of men who have sex with men. Why is this?**

Monkeypox is spread from person to person through close contact. The risk of monkeypox is not limited to men who have sex with men. Anyone who has close contact with someone who is infectious is at risk.

One reason we are currently hearing reports of cases of monkeypox from sexual health clinics in communities of men who have sex with men in this outbreak may be because of positive health seeking behaviour in this demographic.

Monkeypox rashes can resemble some sexually transmitted diseases, including herpes and syphilis, which may explain why these cases are being picked up at sexual health clinics. It is likely that as we learn more, we may identify cases in the broader community.

**Where can I learn more about monkeypox?**

Find answers to some of the most common questions on [PAHO Q&A](https://www.paho.org) and [WHO’s factsheet](https://www.who.int) and on the disease. Check your local official sources for the situation near you.

---

If you are having sex with multiple partners, seek regular screening for sexually transmitted infections and take PrEP where it is available. Seeking health advice regularly and quickly, if you have symptoms, will help you get treatment if needed and avoid you infecting anyone else.

**Remember - condoms may not prevent monkeypox but can prevent other sexually transmitted infections.**