



Dallas County Health & Human Services (DCHHS) recognizes and celebrates LGBTQ+ communities, honors the history of Pride Month, and commits to working together to ensure continued progress.

Monkeypox is a disease that can affect anyone. It's known to currently be circulating among members of the LGBTQ+ community and may be spread at large celebrations or social events. What do we know?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) defines Monkeypox as a disease that can make you sick, including a rash, which may look like pimples or blisters, often with an earlier flu-like illness. Monkeypox can spread to anyone through close, personal, often skin-to-skin contact including:

- Direct contact with monkeypox rash, sores, or scabs from a person with monkeypox. We believe this is currently the most common way that monkeypox is spreading in the U.S.
- Contact with objects, fabrics (clothing, bedding, or towels), and surfaces that have been used by someone with monkeypox.
- Contact with respiratory secretions, through kissing and other face-to-face contact.

This contact can happen when you have sex including:

- Oral, anal, and vaginal sex or touching the genitals (penis, testicles, labia, and vagina) or anus (butt) of a person with monkeypox.
- Hugging, massaging, and kissing.
- Touching fabrics and objects during sex that were used by a person with monkeypox and that have not been disinfected, such as bedding, towels, fetish gear, and sex toys.

How can a person lower the chance of getting monkeypox at places like raves, parties, clubs, and festivals?

When thinking about what to do, seek out information from trusted sources like the local health department or the CDC. Second, consider how much close, personal, skin-to-skin contact is likely to occur at the event you plan to attend. If you feel sick or have any rashes or sores, do not attend any gathering, and see a healthcare provider immediately.

- Festivals, events, and concerts where attendees are fully clothed and unlikely to share skin-to-skin contact are safer. However, attendees should be mindful of activities (like kissing) that might spread monkeypox.

- A rave, party, or club where there is minimal clothing and where there is direct, personal, often skin-to-skin contact has some risk. Avoid any rashes or sores you see on others and consider minimizing skin-to-skin contact when possible.
- Enclosed spaces, such as back rooms, saunas, or sex clubs, where there is minimal or no clothing and where intimate sexual contact occurs have a higher likelihood of spreading monkeypox.

How can a person lower their risk during sex?

Talk to your partner about any recent illness and be aware of new or unexplained sores or rashes on your body or your partner's body, including the genitals and anus. If you or your partner have recently been sick, currently feel sick, or have a new or unexplained rash or sores, do not have sex and see a healthcare provider. This is always a good plan, even if monkeypox isn't in your area.

If you or a partner has monkeypox, the best way to protect yourself and others is to not have sex of any kind (oral, anal, vaginal) and not kiss or touch each other's bodies while you are sick, especially any rash or sores. Do not share things like towels, fetish gear, sex toys, and toothbrushes.

If you or your partner have (or think you might have) monkeypox and you decide to have sex, consider the following to reduce the chance of spreading the virus:

- Have virtual sex with no in-person contact.
- Masturbate together at a distance of at least 6 feet, without touching each other and without touching any rash or sores.
- Consider having sex with your clothes on or covering areas where rash or sores are present, reducing as much skin-to-skin contact as possible.
- Avoid kissing.
- Remember to wash your hands, fetish gear, sex toys, and any fabrics (bedding, towels, clothing) after having sex.
- Limit your number of partners to avoid opportunities for monkeypox to spread.
- avoid sharing drinks or drinking after others to prevent fluid transmission.