

# WHAT PET OWNERS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT MPOX



## 1 What is mpox?

Mpox is a rare viral disease caused by the mpox virus. The virus is zoonotic and can spread between humans and animals as well as from animal to animal. In humans, mpox causes fever, headache, backache, and swollen lymph nodes, followed by a blister-like rash. Based on limited information available at this time, risk to the public appears low. People who may have symptoms of mpox, such as characteristic rashes or lesions, should contact their health care provider for a risk assessment.



## 2 How is mpox spread?

Mpox is spread by direct and indirect contact with an infected person, animal or materials contaminated with the virus. The virus can enter the body through the eyes, nose, mouth, broken skin or respiratory tract. The virus spreads between humans through respiratory droplets (such as prolonged face-to-face contact), direct contact with body fluids or skin lesions and indirect contact with contaminated materials (clothing, linens). The virus can spread from animals to humans through bites or scratches, eating infected animal tissues, direct contact with body fluids or skin lesions and indirect contact with contaminated materials such as bedding.

## 3 Could your pet have mpox?

Monkeys and apes, a variety of rodents (including rats, mice, squirrels and prairie dogs) and rabbits are known to be susceptible to infection. The complete range of animal species that can be infected by the mpox virus is still not known; other wild and domestic animals (such as dogs and cats) may be susceptible. Additionally, your pet would need to be exposed to a person or animal sick with mpox to get the disease.

## 4 What are the symptoms to look for in pets?

Symptoms of mpox vary between species. Symptoms may include lethargy, decreased appetite, fever, cough, crusting or clouding of the eyes, swelling in the front and hind limbs from enlarged lymph nodes, and a bumpy or blister-like rash.

### Key messages

- Mpox is a zoonotic disease that can spread between humans and animals.
- At this time, risk to the public and animals is low.

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## ⑤ What to do if your pet was exposed to mpox?

If your pet has potentially been exposed to mpox, but is not showing symptoms of the disease, it may need to be monitored for signs of illness. If you suspect your pet was exposed to a person or animal with mpox, contact Veterinary Public Health to discuss risk and safety measures.

## ⑥ What to do if you think your pet has mpox?

The risk to animals is low at this time. However, if your pet has been exposed to a sick animal or person and is showing the symptoms of mpox, please follow these instructions:

### DO

- Separate the animal from people and other animals immediately (isolate in a separate room).
- Wash your hands using soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer after contact with the animal and any object that may be contaminated with virus.
- Clean and disinfect any surfaces or bedding after contact or use. Most household disinfectants (e.g. bleach) are effective against mpox.
- Contact your veterinarian to discuss your pet's symptoms if you feel your pet is ill and needs care.

### DO NOT

- Do **not** take your pet to a veterinary hospital without first calling to discuss suspected mpox.
- Do **not** leave your pet at an animal shelter. Do not release your pet into the wild. If it is infected, this could spread the disease to other animals and people. It is very important that this disease be contained.

### Additional resources

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Monkeypox, General  
<https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/index.html>

Center for Food Security and Public Health, Monkeypox Frequently Asked Questions  
<https://www.cfsph.iastate.edu/Factsheets/pdfs/monkeypox.pdf>