Monkeypox
What you need to know.

What is monkeypox?
Monkeypox is a viral disease caused by the monkeypox virus. Monkeypox is a member of the Orthopoxvirus genus (ortho - mouth & pox - skin pustules) and is a zoonotic disease meaning that it can be passed from animals to humans. It is usually found in Central and West Africa. It is related to a group of viruses such as the smallpox virus (Variola) and the cowpox virus.

Is monkeypox the same as chickenpox?
The monkeypox virus is not closely related to the chickenpox virus.

What are the symptoms of monkeypox?
Monkeypox causes fever and swollen lymph nodes. Headache, muscle and backache, chills, and exhaustion can also be present. One to three days after the onset of fever, a blister-like rash usually appears first in the mouth or on the face and then spreads to other parts of the body. The rash goes through several stages including fluid and pus-filled blisters that eventually get crusty, scab over, and fall off.

How soon after exposure to the virus do you get sick?
On average it takes 5 to 13 days after exposure for symptoms to start, but could take as long as 21 days.

Who is at most risk for contracting serious symptoms of monkeypox?
Newborns, young children, and people with underlying immune deficiencies are at most risk.

How long does monkeypox last?
Symptoms usually last between 2 to 4 weeks. Severe cases may last longer.

Is monkeypox a Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI)?
Monkeypox is mostly spread by close skin-to-skin contact. It is unknown if monkeypox can be transmitted through semen or vaginal fluids. However, the rash can look similar to symptoms of STIs such as Herpes and Syphilis and can be found on the mouth and genitals.

What is my risk for contracting monkeypox?
Right now the risk for contracting monkeypox is low for the general public. A person can become infected with the monkeypox virus by close contact with someone who is infected, including lengthy face-to-face contact. Touching body fluids like saliva and fluid or scabs from blisters of an infected person can cause infection. A person can also become infected by touching contaminated materials such as sheets, towels and clothing.
Can you die from monkeypox?
In most cases, the symptoms of monkeypox go away after a few weeks, however, in some cases they can lead to medical complications and even death. Newborns, young children, and people with immune deficiencies may be at a higher risk for severe symptoms.

Can monkeypox pass from a pregnant person to a newborn?
Yes. Monkeypox can pass to a baby through the placenta or right after birth during skin-to-skin contact.

What is the treatment for monkeypox?
Right now, there is no proven, safe treatment. Symptoms can be managed by a healthcare provider.

What should I do if I think I have monkeypox?
If you think you have monkeypox contact your health care provider for advice, testing and medical care. Self-isolate away from others to protect them from infection. Cover all possible blisters (e.g., wearing clothing over the rash). Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Practice good hand hygiene after touching any blisters by washing with soap and water or using an alcohol-based sanitizer.

What should I do if I am caring for someone with monkeypox?
If you are caring for someone who is infected with monkeypox, the goal is to limit exposure. Use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as wearing latex gloves and a mask. Cover all possible blisters. Practice good hand hygiene after contact with an infected person or anything they may have touched by washing with soap and water or using an alcohol-based sanitizer. Contact your healthcare provider for advice, testing and medical care if you develop symptoms.

Is there monkeypox in the United States?
Prior to the 2022 international outbreak infections of monkeypox in the U.S were very rare. Monkeypox does not occur naturally in the U.S. but cases have happened because of international travel or importing animals where the disease is more common.

For more information, visit https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/response/2022/index.html.