



Monkeypox – information for people awaiting a test result

You have been provided this factsheet as you have been identified as someone who **may** have monkeypox. Your doctor or public health unit has organised a test for monkeypox.

What is monkeypox?

Monkeypox is usually a mild illness which resolves by itself after 2-4 weeks. A small number of people may develop severe illness.

Monkeypox is spread by very close contact with someone with monkeypox, such as skin-to-skin contact, prolonged face-to-face contact through respiratory droplets, or infected objects or surfaces. Since May 2022, there has been an increase in cases of monkeypox around the world.

Further information is available at [HealthyWA](#)

Do I need to stay at home?

If you are considered higher risk of having monkeypox, you will need to **stay at home** until you receive a negative monkeypox result.

You are considered higher risk if you have symptoms of monkeypox, such as a rash, **and** in the past 21 days:

- travelled overseas, OR
- come into contact with someone with monkeypox, OR
- had sexual and/or physical intimate contact with a gay, bisexual or other man who has sex with men, OR
- had sexual and/or intimate contact at social events associated with monkeypox activity (e.g. sex-on-premises venues, festivals)

A list of monkeypox symptoms can be found at [HealthyWA](#).

If you need to stay at home, you should:

- Only leave for essential activities in non-crowded settings, which may include to buy groceries, medicines or for solo outdoor exercise.
- Work from home. If this is not possible, contact your local public health unit who can discuss options with you.
- Wear a mask when in the same room as others and cover any skin lesions.
- When leaving home, wear a mask, cover any rash or lesions, avoid close contact with others, and avoid public transport if the rash cannot be completely covered.
- Visitors to the home should be discouraged.
- Avoid sharing household items such as clothing, bed linen, towels, crockery and utensils. If others must touch unwashed items, they should wear gloves and a surgical mask.
- Use a separate bathroom or ensure disinfection and cleaning after use.
- Avoid contact with animals, particularly dogs and rodents (mice, rats, gerbils, hamsters, guinea pigs, squirrels etc). This includes sleeping in a separate room away from pets. It is possible for monkeypox to be passed from human to animals through contact such as petting and cuddling.

What else do I need to do?

You should also follow any other advice provided by your doctor or the public health unit, which may include advice to stay at home for other reasons.

While you are awaiting your test results, regardless of whether you are considered higher risk or not, you should:

- Avoid physical and sexual contact with others.
- Avoid contact with people who are at higher risk of severe disease, including people with low immunity, pregnant women, older people and young children.
- Avoid attending settings such as early childhood education centres, aged care, healthcare settings (unless you need



urgent medical attention), and schools, especially settings with young children and vulnerable people (those with low immunity or pregnant women). This includes for routine appointments, unless seeking time-critical medical attention.

- Clean hands frequently using alcohol-based hand sanitiser or soap and water.
- Cover mouth and nose when sneezing and coughing with disposable tissues. Dispose of used tissues into a rubbish bag and clean hands.
- Do not share toothbrushes, razors, towels, wash cloths or other personal items with others.
- Do not donate blood, cells, tissue, breastmilk, semen or organs.

If you need to seek urgent medical attention, where possible, you should contact the emergency department ahead of time to let them know you are coming and that you are awaiting a test result for monkeypox. You should wear a mask and cover up any rash. Take this letter with you.

How will I find out about my result?

You will be contacted by your doctor or public health unit when your results are available. This may take a few days.

What if my test is positive?

If your test result is positive, your local public health unit will contact you and provide you further advice as to what you need to do. Advice for positive cases is available at:

[Positive monkeypox cases \(healthywa.wa.gov.au\)](https://www.healthywa.wa.gov.au/Articles/J_M/Monkeypox)

What can I expect if I am positive?

Most people will recover without any specific treatment. The illness is usually mild, and recovery takes a few weeks. However, in some people, the sores can be painful.

Simple pain medications and keeping up oral fluids will help manage symptoms.

A small number of people may develop severe illness. Antiviral medications may be recommended under the guidance of a specialist doctor.

What if my test is negative?

If you receive a negative result, your doctor or public health unit will advise you on what you need to do. You no longer need to stay at home due to the risk of monkeypox, however, there may be other conditions or diagnoses that your doctor may consider when providing further advice.

Do I need to get vaccinated?

If your result is positive, you will not need to be vaccinated. Vaccination for monkeypox is not currently recommended for people who have had monkeypox.

If your result is negative and you meet the eligibility criteria for receiving a monkeypox vaccine, you should consider getting the vaccine to best protect yourself against the monkeypox virus. Up-to-date eligibility criteria can be found on [HealthyWA](https://www.healthywa.wa.gov.au/).

Key messages

- If you are considered higher risk of monkeypox, stay at home until you receive a negative result for monkeypox. There are additional precautions you should take if you need to leave home for essential activities.
- If you receive a positive result, your local public health unit will contact you and provide you further advice.
- If your test result is negative, consider getting the monkeypox vaccine.
- Further information is available at www.healthywa.wa.gov.au/Articles/J_M/Monkeypox

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