

Dear Campus Community,

Recently, the [World Health Organization](#) declared monkeypox a public health emergency of international concern. As of August 2022, a relatively small number of cases have been reported both in Missouri, as well as in the St Louis metropolitan area. Monkeypox can affect anyone regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation, and we are preparing our community for the possibility of cases on campus. The current risk of monkeypox in the general public is very low, based on information available. Below, you will find information and resources regarding monkeypox, as well as information on how UMSL is preparing to respond in the event of cases on campus.

What is monkeypox?

Monkeypox is a rash illness caused by the monkeypox virus. The time period from exposure to onset of symptoms (incubation period) is on average 1-2 weeks. The symptoms can start with fever, chills, headache, muscle aches, swollen lymph nodes, which is then followed by a rash. Not all cases report having the initial symptoms or sometimes the symptoms follow, rather than precede, rash onset. The rash or sores may be located on or near the genitals (penis, testicles, labia, and vagina) or anus (butt) but could also be on other areas like the hands, feet, chest, and face. They may also be limited to one part of the body. The rash can look like pimples or blisters. The rash goes through different stages before healing completely in approximately 2-4 weeks. Monkeypox can spread from the time symptoms start until all sores have healed and a fresh layer of skin has formed.

How is monkeypox spread?

The mode of transmission for monkeypox virus includes direct contact with infectious rash, scabs, or body fluids; respiratory secretions during prolonged face-to-face contact or during intimate physical contact such as kissing, cuddling, or sex; indirectly through touching items such as clothing, linens, bandages, etc. that previously were in contact with infectious rash/body fluids; or to a fetus through placenta during pregnancy. Monkeypox is NOT spread through casual brief conversations or casual contacts, like walking by someone with monkeypox.

What to do if you have had an exposure or symptoms

If you have had an exposure, have symptoms you are concerned about, or need to speak with someone about your risk, please reach out to your primary care provider. Students can call Health Services at 314-516-5671 to discuss symptoms and next steps to take. Currently, there are some challenges with access to testing, although Health staff will assist to identify options. Testing is also available through the Missouri State Public Health Laboratory (SPHL). The North Central Community Health Center's Sexual Health Clinic has limited walk-in testing available. Call (314) 615-9736 for additional information

Is there a vaccine?

Yes. Vaccination helps to protect against monkeypox when given before or shortly after a confirmed exposure. Due to the low supply of vaccines currently available, monkeypox vaccination is being recommended for a very limited number of people since the virus is not spreading widely in the St. Louis area.

- The Department of Public Health (DPH) is vaccinating people who are likely to have been recently exposed to monkeypox. If you believe you have had close exposure to someone with monkeypox and have not been contacted by DPH, please email DPH.Monkeypox.Vaccine@stlouiscountymo.gov. Please include the details of your exposure (or potential exposure), including dates and types of contact. If you meet the criteria, DPH will contact you to make a vaccine appointment.
- The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services also has limited resources. Individuals are asked to complete an online form to determine eligibility
<https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/5d97bdd7709a41b9817c33eed6edac7d>.
- Please note that you cannot get vaccinated if it has been more than 14 days since you were exposed. You also cannot get vaccinated if you already have symptoms of monkeypox.

How is the campus preparing?

Health Services providers and staff have been trained in identifying monkeypox, and we are collaborating with Saint Louis County Department of Health for testing and vaccination. We will work with students on notifying professors of class absence if the student needs to self-isolate until the infectious period has passed. UMSL will continue

to work closely with Saint Louis County Department of Health to keep the campus prepared, informed, and healthy.

We understand that news of a new infectious disease on top of the last few years of the COVID-19 pandemic can be concerning and result in feelings of anxiety and uncertainty. Campus mental health resources are available through [UMSL Counseling Services](#).

More information

For additional information, please visit the monkeypox information pages at [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) and the [St. Louis County Department of Public Health](#). We will continue to communicate with the campus as we have new information to share.