

# The Monkeypox Gay Guide

## Tips & Tricks For Our Queer Communities

No-one wanted another health outbreak, so close behind COVID. But here we are, and it's time again for our queer communities to work together to educate, activate and organise!



### Knowledge = power

Information about monkeypox and its transmission is developing as we learn more about it. Stay up-to-date with the facts about monkeypox from reliable, evidence-based sources. Information can change fast. Fight stigma and disinformation.



### Stay calm

Monkeypox is a concern because it's being transmitted in ways that it's not usually transmitted. Most people aren't hospitalised and get relatively mild symptoms. But it's still not nice to get. Take it seriously - but don't panic.



### Fight stigma

There's no shame in finding out you have monkeypox. Many of us are learning we have it because we take positive steps to look after our health and well-being. Stigma stops us from accessing health care, contacting our sexual partners, and harms mental health. We can't let stigma do more harm than the virus. Call it out, fight it, and hold people accountable.



### Know how it's transmitted

Many recent cases of monkeypox have been transmitted during close physical contact - including during sex. Close contact that doesn't involve sex - such as skin-to-skin sweaty dancing - might also pass monkeypox along.



### Know the symptoms

Know about the common symptoms of monkeypox. They include new rashes, sores, blisters and spots - including around the genitals. Some people also get fevers, headaches, swollen and painful glands, muscles aches, or exhaustion.



### Know what to do

If you think you have monkeypox, or you've been told you've been in close contact with someone who has it, follow your local health protocols. Phone before visiting a health service - don't just turn up.



### Take a break if you're feeling unwell

If you have any of the symptoms above - or have been in close contact with someone diagnosed with monkeypox - consider taking a break until you've had medical advice and know you're well.



### Get support

If you test positive for monkeypox, draw on the support networks around you. Grab help with shopping and chores. Ask a buddy to pick up your meds. And look after lesions and sores - you could end up needing hospital treatment if they get infected. Remember monkeypox is nothing to be ashamed of.



### Contact and connect

If you're hooking up, try to keep contact details of your hook-ups so that you can inform them of possible exposure, or so they can inform you. There's no judgement in doing this - it just helps to trace contacts; and only if it's safe to do so.



## Watch out for vaccination programmes

As cases of monkeypox increase, targeted vaccination programmes are being introduced. Ask politicians and public health experts when and how vaccination will be introduced. And - if you have a local vaccination programme - get up to speed about what it entails. If you get a vaccine, push for access in other places too.



## Don't be a jerk

No-one likes to find out they have a new infection. The way we respond when we're told - from a hook-up or by a friend - will determine how someone tells others in the future. Gossip, rumour, and nasty responses help none of us.



## Gay is OK

Current outbreaks of monkeypox are being seen especially in social and sexual networks of some gay and bisexual men. Monkeypox is not a "gay virus". But as our community is being disproportionately impacted we need a response that considers our experiences. Call out the "gay virus" narratives when you see them, including in the media, among public health officials and elected officials.



## Become a health activist

COVID showed us what's possible around rapid vaccination development when we work together. But it also demonstrated the inequity of global health, with millions still without COVID care. This must change. We can work together to ensure all people have access to quality healthcare. Join the fight for equality and justice.



## Keep your spirits up

We've been here before! Boy - have we been here before! Just as with previous pandemics, we can still pursue pleasure, joy and intimacy. And we must be vigilant in our fight against stigma. Together we'll get through this one!



## Stay informed

[www.queerhealth.info/monkeypox](http://www.queerhealth.info/monkeypox)

