

To all students and staff at  
Universities in Lothian

Date 7 June 2022  
Your Ref HPT  
Our Ref Health Protection Team

## Monkeypox information

I am writing to update you about monkeypox following considerable coverage of this condition in the media. The information below is taken from the NHS Inform website:

[www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/monkeypox](http://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/monkeypox).

As the situation is changing rapidly, please visit this website for updates.

### Introduction

Monkeypox is a rare viral infection. It mainly occurs in central and west Africa. However since May 2022 some cases have been reported in UK, Europe and other international countries. The risk of catching monkeypox in Scotland currently remains low.

### Symptoms of monkeypox

Symptoms usually start 5 to 21 days after exposure. The symptoms often get better by themselves over 2 to 4 weeks.

Symptoms of monkeypox can include:

- high temperature (fever)
- headache
- flu-like symptoms, including muscle and back aches, shivering and tiredness
- swollen glands that feel like new lumps (in the neck, armpits or groin)
- a blistering rash that usually starts 1 to 5 days after other symptoms – the rash may start on the face or in the genital area and may spread to other parts of the body

The skin lesions (pox) go through 4 phases:

1. Flat spots
2. Raised spots
3. Blisters
4. Healing by scabbing or crusting over and then the scabs falling off

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*Lothian NHS Board is the common  
name of Lothian Health Board*

Monkeypox rash can sometimes be confused with other diseases that can look similar, like chickenpox. A diagnosis of monkeypox requires an assessment by a health professional and specific testing.

## How monkeypox is spread

Monkeypox does not spread very easily between people. However, you can catch monkeypox from close contact with an infected person with monkeypox through:

- touching blisters or scabs and having any skin contact (including sexual contact)
- touching clothes, bedding, towels or personal items used by a person who has a monkeypox rash, blisters or scabs
- coughs or sneezes from a person with monkeypox

To reduce your risk of exposure to monkeypox you should:

- avoid close contact, including sexual contact, with someone who is unwell and may have monkeypox
- avoid touching the clothes, bedding or towels of a person who may have a monkeypox rash
- avoid coughs and sneezes from a person who may have monkeypox
- practice careful hand hygiene if visiting or caring for ill friends and relatives who may have monkeypox

## Treating monkeypox

Monkeypox is usually a mild illness. Most people recover in 2 to 4 weeks.

However, in some cases if a person is really unwell, they may require hospital treatment in a specialist unit.

People who are diagnosed with monkeypox will need to isolate to stop it being spread to others. Healthcare professionals provide advice to monkeypox cases and their contacts.

## What to do if you're worried you have monkeypox

You should stay home, avoid close contact with others and seek help with medical services **via phone** until you're assessed.

### Phone your GP if:

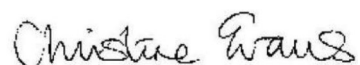
- you think that you may have monkeypox
- you have been in close contact with someone who might have monkeypox

If your GP is closed, phone 111. In an emergency phone 999.

Remember that number of monkeypox cases is currently low in Scotland. Your risk remains low unless you have had close contact with a case.

Advice for the public will continue to be updated on [NHS Inform](#). Information to support healthcare professionals is available on the Public Health Scotland website: <https://publichealthscotland.scot/our-areas-of-work/monkeypox/>.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Christine Evans'.

Dr Christine Evans  
Consultant in Public Health Medicine  
NHS Lothian