



# Monkeypox and Companion Animals

August 19, 2022

## Prevent monkeypox infection in pets

Monkeypox is an orthopox virus that can be spread between animals and humans (zoonotic disease). Although rarely reported, people can get monkeypox from animals and it is possible that certain animals can be infected with monkeypox after having close contact with people who have the disease. At this time, there is more to learn about which types of animals can get monkeypox. It is unlikely that reptiles, amphibians, and birds can become infected because they do not get other orthopoxviruses. Typical domestic animals like cats and dogs are thought to be low risk, though are theoretically susceptible. Animals like non-human primates and some rodents (ex. prairie dogs) have more evidence of infection with orthopoxviruses available. More information on the types of animals that can be infected with monkeypox and what is known about how susceptible they are can be found here:

<https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/veterinarian/monkeypox-in-animals.html>

The virus is present in the scabs, crusts, and fluids of the rash, and in bodily fluids, such as respiratory secretions, and potentially in urine and feces. It is important to remember that animals are not suspected to play a significant role in transmission in the current outbreak and persons are most likely to contract monkeypox from another human through close, skin-to-skin contact. Following guidance below can help to protect animals in the household of monkeypox cases and prevent infection in those animals regardless of susceptibility. **Animals should not be surrendered, abandoned, or euthanized based on suspicion of monkeypox or for being present in a household where humans have tested positive for monkeypox.**

People who have monkeypox should avoid close contact (petting, cuddling, kissing, licking, sharing sleeping areas, and sharing food) with animals (pets and wildlife) until they are released from isolation and no longer considered infectious. If you have been diagnosed with monkeypox, ask a friend or family member not living in the same household to care for your pets while you recover if the pets have not had close contact with you after your illness began.

If your pet(s) was possibly exposed to monkeypox virus through close contact (petting, cuddling, kissing, licking, sharing sleeping areas, and sharing food) while you or a person in your household were contagious, the pet should be kept at home and away from other animals and people for 21 days after the most recent exposure. In some situations, for example if there are people in the household that have immunocompromising conditions, are pregnant, or children < 8 years of age live in the home, the pet may need to isolate and be cared for by others outside the home due to the risk for severe outcomes in these household members.

If you have monkeypox and do not have anyone to care for your pet(s) while you are ill, please follow the below recommendations to minimize the risk of spreading monkeypox to your pet(s):

- Avoid close contact with your pet(s) as much as possible
- Cover your rash as much as possible (wear long sleeves and long pants)
- Wear gloves and a mask while caring for your pet
- Make sure your pet(s) do not come into contact with contaminated articles such as clothing, sheets, towels, bandages, etc.

- Make sure that the pets' food, toys, bedding, or other items used to care for your pet(s) do not come into contact with your skin or uncovered rash

### **What to watch for in pets who have had exposure to monkeypox**

Pets that have had close contact (petting, cuddling, kissing, licking, sharing sleeping areas, and sharing food) with an infected person in the home should be monitored for illness for 21 days after the most recent contact. Not all the signs of infection in companion animals are known, but if your pet develops signs of an illness such as lethargy (sluggishness), decreased appetite, coughing, nasal secretions or skin crusts, bloating, fever, and/or a pimple- or blister-like skin rash, you should call your veterinarian and let them know that the ill pet had recent exposure to monkeypox.

**Do not bring your pet to the vet's office unless it is an emergency.**

Your veterinarian will need to consult with the State Public Health Veterinarians at the Georgia Department of Public Health to determine if testing is indicated. What we know about monkeypox in pets indicates that, just like in humans, it will not typically cause severe or life-threatening illness, and there is no specific treatment for monkeypox in companion animals. Although testing may be warranted, in most cases it may be safer for you and your pet to treat the symptoms of monkeypox at home with supportive care like fluids and rest. Your veterinarian, in consultation with state public health officials will help you to decide if testing is needed in your situation.