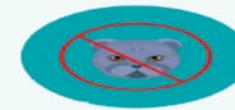


# STATETIMES

## SUNDAY

Your Companion for a Funday

 PROTECT YOURSELF FROM COVID-19



## Monkeypox can spread by direct skin-to-skin contact; high risk activities you should avoid

India reported its 9th monkeypox case on Wednesday, wherein a 31-year-old Nigerian woman tested positive for the virus. Becoming the first woman in the country to test positive for monkeypox, officials have noted symptoms like fever and skin lesions in her. According to a PTI report, the patient is admitted to LNJP hospital.

Over 75 countries have reported outbreaks of monkeypox, where the viral disease is not endemic. Earlier the World Health Organization (WHO) declared it as a global health emergency, highlighting the possible dangers associated with it.

That said, given the alarming numbers of monkeypox cases, it is important to stay vigilant and take proper measures against the virus.

Understanding monkeypox and how it spreads

Monkeypox is a rare, viral zoonotic infection that belongs to the same family of viruses as variola virus, the virus that causes smallpox. Fever, headache, muscle/backache, swollen lymph nodes, chills, exhaustion and certain respiratory issues are common symptoms of the viral disease.

Monkeypox transmission can occur through direct contact with a lesion that contains the virus or direct contact with bodily fluids that have the virus in it. That said, it is important to avoid close, direct contact with an infected person.

Below are some of the ways monkeypox spreads and transmits from human to human.

What close, direct skin-to-skin contact means

According to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), monkeypox can spread to anyone through close, personal, often skin-to-skin contact, including direct contact with monkeypox rash, scabs, or body fluids from a person with monkeypox.

Having said that, activities that include intimate contact such as oral, anal, and vaginal sex or touching the genitals, hugging, massaging, kissing and prolonged face-to-face contact can also increase one's risk of the virus.

Study reveals monkeypox virus can persist in semen for weeks after recovery

Is monkeypox a sexually transmitted disease? This question is currently on the minds of many people.

While experts have no conclusive report on the same, a recent study by The Lancet found that monkeypox virus can persist in semen for weeks after recovery.



Having assessed viral shedding in semen samples collected 5–19 days after symptom onset in a patient, Francesca Colavita, a researcher from the Laboratory of Virology, National Institute for Infectious Diseases 'Lazzaro Spallanzani' (IRCCS), Italy, has said, "Our findings support that prolonged shedding of monkeypox virus DNA can occur in the semen of infected patients for weeks after symptoms onset."

The patient was diagnosed at Italy's Lazzaro Spallanzani National Institute for Infectious Diseases and had a travel history to Austria during the first two weeks of May. The man self-identifies himself as someone who has sex with men and sexworkers. He also self-reported unsafe sexual intercourse with several male partners during his travel.

"The case discussed herein supports that transmission of monkeypox virus during sexual activity might be a viable and recognised route, especially in the current 2022 outbreak of disease," Colavita said, adding that the "prolonged viral DNA shedding, even at low viral copies, might hint at a possible genital reservoir".

However, "since the patient was an HIV-infected, viro-immunological responder, we cannot entirely exclude the possibility of an effect of HIV-associated chronic immune dysregulation on prolonged monkeypox virus shedding in semen," she added.

Health authorities have maintained that the virus is not a sexually transmitted disease and anyone can contract the disease by close contact.

Sharing clothing, bedding, or towels can increase the spread

The CDC also warns against touching fabrics and objects that were used by a person with monkeypox and that have not been disinfected, such as bedding, towels, clothing.

It is believed that a person with monkeypox can spread the virus to others from the time symptoms start until the rash has fully healed and a fresh layer of skin has formed. The illness typically lasts 2-4 weeks, as per the health body.

Enclosed spaces may raise likelihood of virus spread

As per the CDC, enclosed spaces, such as back rooms, saunas, sex clubs, or private and public sex parties where intimate, often anonymous sexual contact with multiple partners occurs, may have a higher likelihood of spreading monkeypox.

Can monkeypox spread through respiratory secretions?

Primarily, monkeypox spreads through prolonged skin-to-skin contact with lesions or bodily fluids containing the virus. However, according to the CDC, contact with respiratory secretions can also increase your chances of the disease.

The CDC's "What We Still Don't Know" section reads: "How often monkeypox virus may be spread from respiratory secretions, or at what point during infection a person with monkeypox symptoms might be more likely to spread monkeypox virus through respiratory secretions."

While this does not confirm that monkeypox can spread through respiratory secretions, the health agency does not completely disown the theory.

Health officials have also warned against coming in contact with people who could be showing respiratory symptoms such as coughs, sneezes and sore throats associated with monkeypox.

## Are you overcautious or too casual about COVID? These questions will help you decide

We have lived through the COVID pandemic for two years now. We know a great deal about how to manage the infection, how to remain safe, when should we go for COVID testing and how important it is to remain isolated from others when there is an infection.

But, these are just a thing or two about the pandemic! The major responsibility lies in living the rules every single moment. Negligence made by individuals snowballs and leads to a pandemic situation. So, while you might be thinking you are doing the best in avoiding the infection, these questions might be a clue if you are doing it right or not.

**Do you wear a mask?**

Many people are seen not wearing masks these days. Maybe the very thought that vaccines have made them invincible against the virus is why they do not prefer wearing masks.

However, irrespective of whatever measures you are taking to protect yourself, if you are not wearing masks, you are too casual about the infection.

COVID reinfections are a possibility and many cases of reinfections have been reported from vaccinated individuals as well.

**Do you only wear the mask in public places?**

If you are one among those who have not yet forgotten their battle against the coronavirus, you must definitely be wearing the mask at a crowded place.

Wearing masks guards you against the virus and at the same time it also guards others against the possibility of virus transmission by you. Therefore by wearing a mask you are not just protecting yourself, you are also protecting others.

**Do you remove the mask immediately after deboarding a metro or bus or any other public transportation mode?**

Though many people wear masks at public places or while taking public transport, they remove it immediately after deboarding the metro or bus.



This is a wrong practice. Masks should not be removed immediately after a ride in public transport or immediately after returning from a crowded place. It should be disposed of properly so that the viruses which might be present on the outer surface of the mask do not get a chance to enter the body.

**Do you prefer not to wear a mask in the office or at home?**

Only if your house or office is properly ventilated, you can prefer not to wear masks inside. But if it is crowded and there is no proper ventilation, it is always advisable to wear masks.

Virus does not see whether you are indoors or outdoors, it affects you the moment it gets a chance to enter your system.

**How often do you sanitize your hands?**

Just when the pandemic had hit the world, there was a dearth of hand sanitizers in shops. But right now, nobody seems to be using it.

Hand sanitizers keep your palm surface sterilized and devoid of the virus. It limits the entry of viruses through the mouth and nostrils which often happens through the hands.

It is very important to keep the hands sanitized particularly when you are using surfaces which are also used by others.

The coronavirus will remain in the environment and will wait for its chance to enter a host body and spread from there. It is on us to keep ourselves protected from the virus. While safety protocols should be followed, we should also be careful about the symptoms. Even those with mild symptoms can spread the infection at a faster rate.

One should also be careful about the testing and isolation. If someone in your close contact has tested positive for the virus, test yourself and keep yourself isolated till the incubation period.

## Expert reveals how this month will be for your teens, school-goers

August 2022 will be a hectic month for teens. School going ones who want to excel in academics should be more focused on being regular in school and being polite to their teachers. Those who are aiming for medals and awards in extra-curricular activities should not waste their time anymore. In this article, astrologer Manav Jaitley has predicted how teens and school going kids born under different zodiac signs will fare in academic and non-academic activities this month.

**Aries**

The kids born in aries will remain hyperactive. These kids may resort to lies and manipulative talking this month which should be avoided at any cost. So kids, be careful with what you say, because this month will be filled with joy and happiness at home no doubt but your lies can disturb the ambience.

**Taurus**

Kids of this sunshine will shine bright and there is a chance they might travel to a nearby place. They will do well academically and also we get a chance to participate in some upcoming competition. Mood swings will be very common in these kids this month.

**Gemini**

Gemini born kids will have a gala time in enjoying festivities and will also do a lot of shopping with their parents. Their mood will be bright and as happy and cheerful as always. But these kids need to take care of their health.

**Cancer**

Kids born in this sunshine will have some mood swings which might look like some sort of depression. Taking them for outdoor activities will help them to change their mood and will also encourage them to do better academically.

**Leo**

Those born in this dominant sign will continue to show their dominance this month. Pursuing an activity at school or maybe at college seems obvious, in which



they will shine bright, and this is likely to show them their true competent abilities.

**Virgo**

Virgo children will become a bit distracted and their studies would suffer. They would enjoy the festivities of the upcoming month which would affect their health. Falling sick will be a headache for their parents. Overall the month will be average

for them.

**Libra**

These kids may feel a bit stressed out and outdoor activities or the leisure tours may make them feel exhausted. It is a good time to make them return to their studies.

**Scorpio**

Kids born under scorpio sign may develop the tendency to speak lies with their parents, so it is the duty of the parents to remain calm and show them the right path once their lies are caught. It seems this month Scorpio born kids will be more interested in sports than studies .

**Sagittarius**

Sagittarius kids are likely to bring home medals and awards this month. They will also show their interest in studies and do very well in school. Something remarkable is definitely evident this month.

**Capricorn**

Too much of a laid-back attitude and letting go of everything will be the attitude of these kids this month. They would complete their work with a lack of enthusiasm and a lot of force or push will be required for them to do and finish their activities.

**Aquarius**

Kids born under Aquarius sign will see some health issues, mostly related to stomach or legs; they may also become a bit irritable. Their academics will remain fine, it's just that the laid-back attitude will make them sit at home and watch TV.

**Pisces**

Kids of this sunshine will keep on pestering parents for luxurious toys of all kinds or for some online games. They might get distracted from their academics, so it is important to keep an eye on them. This month will be beneficial for them.

