

CDC Raises Travel Advisory Due to Monkeypox Outbreak

(Courtesy of Caroline Morse Teel, SMARTERTRAVEL)

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [just raised](#) its general travel advisory from Level 1 (“Practice Usual Precautions”) to Level 2, (“Practice Enhanced Precautions”) due to a growing outbreak of monkeypox.

What Is Monkeypox?

According to the CDC, “Monkeypox is a rare disease caused by infection with monkeypox virus.” Monkeypox had previously only been found in Central and West Africa, however, cases have recently been reported in Europe, North America, and Australia.

Monkeypox is most commonly transmitted through contact with the skin lesions or bodily fluids (including respiratory droplets) of infected animals or humans. It is also possible to contract the virus via contact with materials contaminated with monkeypox.

Monkeypox can make people sick for 2-4 weeks, and is fatal in between 1-11% of victims.

Symptoms include:

- Fever
- Headache
- Muscle aches
- Swollen lymph nodes
- Rash

Fortunately, the CDC emphasizes that the risk to the general public is low. President Biden recently told reporters that he did not anticipate a quarantine to stop the spread of monkeypox in the U.S., saying, “I just don’t think it rises to the level of the kind of concern that existed with covid-19, and the smallpox vaccine works for it.”

How Should Travelers Protect Themselves Against Monkeypox?

The CDC recommends that travelers avoid:

- Close contact with sick people, including those with skin lesions or genital lesions.
- Contact with dead or live wild animals such as small mammals including rodents (rats, squirrels) and non-human primates (monkeys, apes).
- Eating or preparing meat from wild game (bushmeat) or using products derived from wild animals from Africa (creams, lotions, powders).
- Contact with contaminated materials used by sick people (such as clothing, bedding, or materials used in healthcare settings) or that came into contact with infected animals. ([CDC Monkeypox advisory](#))

If you develop a new, unexplained skin rash on any part of your body, the CDC advises avoiding contact with others and seeing a doctor. Call ahead to let your healthcare facility know that you are concerned you may have monkeypox.

Is There a Monkeypox Vaccine?

Studies have shown that the smallpox vaccine is at least 85 percent effective against monkeypox.

Should You Change Your Travel Plans Due to Monkeypox?

The risk to most travelers is still very low, so you do not need to change your plans. Monkeypox is significantly less transmissible than COVID-19. Before you travel, read the [CDC's monkeypox travel advisory](#) and take necessary precautions during your trip.