



Monkey Pox

For Prelims: Viral zoonosis, Monkey Pox, Small Pox.

For Mains: Zoonotic Diseases, Health.

Why in News?

Recently, Health authorities in the **United Kingdom have confirmed a case of monkeypox**, a rare viral infection similar to smallpox, in an individual who **recently travelled to that country from Nigeria**.

- Monkeypox is a **viral zoonosis** (a virus transmitted to humans from animals) with symptoms similar to those seen in the past in [smallpox patients](#), although it is clinically less severe.
- With the eradication of smallpox in 1980 and subsequent cessation of smallpox vaccination, it has emerged as the most important **orthopoxvirus**.
- The genus Orthopoxvirus contains four species that infect humans: variola (smallpox), monkeypox, vaccinia (includes buffalopox), and cowpox.

What is Monkey Pox?

- **About:** Monkeypox is a **viral zoonotic disease** that occurs primarily in tropical rainforest areas of **Central and West Africa** and is occasionally exported to other regions.
 - Monkeypox virus infection has been **detected in squirrels, Gambian poached rats, dormice, and some species of monkeys**.
 - Monkeypox is **caused by monkeypox virus**, a member of the Orthopoxvirus genus in the family Poxviridae.
- **Background:** Monkey Pox infection was **first discovered in 1958** following two outbreaks of a pox-like disease in colonies of monkeys kept for research — which led to the **name ‘monkeypox’**.
- **Symptoms:** Monkeypox typically presents clinically with fever, rash and swollen lymph nodes.
 - It causes the **lymph nodes to swell (lymphadenopathy)**, which smallpox does not.
- **Transmission:** Monkeypox virus is mostly transmitted to people from **wild animals such as rodents and primates**, but human-to-human transmission also occurs.
- **Human to Human Transmission:** The first human case was recorded in 1970 in the **Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)** during a period of intensified effort to eliminate smallpox.
 - Monkeypox virus is transmitted from **one person to another by contact** with lesions, body fluids, respiratory droplets and contaminated materials such as bedding.
- **Incubation Period:** The incubation period (time from infection to symptoms) for monkeypox is usually **7-14 days but can range from 5-21 days**.
- **Fatality Rate:** Typically, up to a tenth of people ill with monkeypox may die, with most deaths occurring in younger age groups.
- **Treatment:** The clinical presentation of monkeypox resembles that of smallpox, a related orthopoxvirus infection which was declared eradicated worldwide in 1980.
 - **Vaccinia vaccine** used during the **smallpox eradication programme was also protective against monkeypox**.

- A new third generation vaccinia vaccine has now been approved for prevention of smallpox and monkeypox. Antiviral agents are also being developed.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Q. Consider the following diseases: (2014)

1. Diphtheria
2. Chickenpox
3. Smallpox

Which of the above diseases has/have been eradicated in India?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 3 only
- (c) 1, 2 and 3
- (d) None

Ans: (b)

[Source: IE](#)

PDF Refernece URL: <https://www.drishtiias.com/printpdf/monkey-pox>