



# 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)**

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