

Monkeypox at the gym: Should you sweat it?

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The recent influx of monkeypox cases in the U.S. has put residents on high alert during their daily routines. Dr. Thomas Giordano, professor and chief of infectious diseases at Baylor College of Medicine, provides insight on best practices for transmission prevention at the gym.

"The short answer is yes, it is possible to get monkeypox at the gym, but

most people are already taking the necessary steps to avoid transmission, so it's unlikely," said Giordano. "We have plenty of ways to protect ourselves in this setting."

In the gym, monkeypox is most likely to spread through shared towels and uncleaned equipment used by someone who recently had or actively has the virus. Giordano advises wiping down equipment, such as weight machines, dumbbells and barbells and yoga mats, before and after use, and not sharing gym towels.

"Most of the surfaces you're coming across in the gym are hard, like plastic and metal, and not porous, like towels and linens," Giordano said. "Because many gyms provided cleaning solutions before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, you can easily wipe away the virus from those hard surfaces."

If cleaning solutions are not available or if you are unsure about the efficacy of the solutions provided at the facilities, Giordano advises bringing products containing between 60–70% ethanol or isopropyl alcohol from home, with permission from gym staff. For extra layers of protection, Giordano also recommends wearing long clothes to cover exposed skin that might come into contact with equipment. Finally, wash your clothes, towels and hands after your workout.

If you lay a gym towel on the equipment, keep the same side touching the equipment on all machines you use and minimize touching that side of the towel.

"Monkeypox is most commonly spread through skin-to-skin contact, so keep that in mind when planning your workout," said Giordano. "It may be a good idea to avoid wearing tank tops or working out shirtless for a little while."

While there is potential for monkeypox to spread through [respiratory droplets](#), masking during high aerobic activities, such as weightlifting, treadmill running or group fitness classes, decreases your chances of getting the virus. Masking also protects against transmission against cold and flu viruses and COVID.

"A lot of gyms have implemented surface cleaning protocols, all of which are effective in preventing the spread of [monkeypox](#)," Giordano said. "Following those protocols in addition to washing your hands and staying home if you feel sick will ensure you're safe."

Provided by Baylor College of Medicine

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