

(also known as herpes B, monkey B virus, herpes simiae, and herpesvirus B)

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## **What is B Virus?**

B virus infection is caused by a herpes virus. The virus is found among macaque monkeys. Macaque monkeys are thought to be the natural host for the virus and usually have no or only mild symptoms when infected with B virus. Infection in monkeys can only be transmitted when the virus is being actively shed in their body fluids.

## **Who gets B Virus and how is it spread?**

Most people will not come in contact with monkeys, so their risk of getting infected with B virus is very low. However, some people, like laboratory workers or veterinarians, who might have contact with macaque monkeys as part of their work, have a higher risk of getting B virus infection. B virus is spread when a person is bitten or scratched by an infected monkey. Other ways people may be exposed include having contact with an infected monkey's tissue or fluid in eyes, nose or mouth or broken skin.

## **What are the symptoms of B Virus?**

The first signs of disease typically are flu-like symptoms such as fever, muscle ache, fatigue, and headache. Then, you may develop small blisters in the wound or area on your body that had contact with the monkey. B virus infections can result in inflammation of the brain and spinal cord resulting in death or severe nervous system damage.

## **How soon after exposure do symptoms appear?**

Onset of symptoms typically occurs within one month of exposure, but symptoms could appear in as little as three to seven days.

## **How is B Virus diagnosed?**

B virus can be diagnosed through a healthcare provider by testing via blood and other specimens. When possible, samples from the monkey should be tested for B virus as well.

## **What is the treatment for B Virus?**

Although B virus infection in humans is extremely rare, when it does occur, it is often fatal unless treated right away; approximately 70% of untreated patients die of complications associated with the infection. Treating B Virus may involve both first aid and antiviral therapy.

## **How can B Virus be prevented?**

There are no vaccines available for B virus. While exposures that involve unpredictable, potentially aggressive animals are not completely preventable, adherence to appropriate laboratory and animal facility protocols will greatly reduce the risk of B virus transmission.

## **How can I learn more about B Virus?**

- If you have concerns about B Virus, contact your healthcare provider.
- Call your local health department. Find your local health department at [vdh.virginia.gov/local-health-districts/](http://vdh.virginia.gov/local-health-districts/)
- Visit CDC's About B Virus page at [cdc.gov/herpesvirus/index.html](http://cdc.gov/herpesvirus/index.html).

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