



June 23, 2022

Dear Colleague:

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is tracking the outbreak of monkeypox that has occurred in several countries that do not normally report human cases of monkeypox, including the United States. As of June 22, 2022, more than 3,300 cases have been reported in 42 countries around the world, including 156 cases in the United States. There have been no deaths reported in the current outbreak. We do not yet know how all these cases are connected or how they were initially exposed to the virus that causes monkeypox. Many of these cases have occurred among gay, bisexual, or other men who have sex with men. CDC is urging healthcare providers in the United States to be alert for patients who have illnesses consistent with monkeypox (including rash, fever, and lymphadenopathy), regardless of gender and sexual orientation.

Enclosed is additional information regarding what we know about monkeypox, monkeypox infection prevention and control, what CDC is doing, and what you can do to help protect your patients.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rochelle P. Walensky", written over a horizontal line.

Rochelle P. Walensky, MD, MPH
Director, CDC

Enclosure

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Information Regarding Monkeypox

What we know:

Monkeypox is a disease caused by monkeypox virus. It is a viral zoonotic disease, meaning that it can spread from animals to people. It can also spread when a person has contact with a person or materials (e.g., bedding, towels) that are contaminated with the virus. Monkeypox can spread through:

- Direct contact with monkeypox lesions on a person's skin
- Contact with contaminated objects, fabrics (clothing, bedding, or towels), and surfaces that have been in contact with someone with monkeypox
- Contact with respiratory secretions during prolonged, face-to-face contact, fluid from lesions, and sometimes tears from a person with monkeypox

Monkeypox can also be spread during intimate contact including:

- Oral, anal, and vaginal sex, or touching the genitals or anus of a person with monkeypox
- Hugging, massage, kissing, or talking closely
- Touching fabrics, shared surfaces, and objects (such as bedding, towels, and sex toys) that were used by a person with monkeypox

People with monkeypox may first develop symptoms including a flu-like illness with fever, headache, muscle aches, exhaustion, and enlarged lymph nodes. A few days later, a characteristic rash occurs. In recent cases, patients have developed localized rashes in the genital and perianal region without prior flu-like symptoms. The incubation period, the time from infection to onset of symptoms, is roughly 1-2 weeks. The illness typically lasts 2-4 weeks and usually resolves without specific treatment. Monkeypox symptoms can sometimes be confused with those associated with syphilis, herpes simplex virus, and chicken pox (varicella zoster virus).

For more information on the clinical recognition of monkeypox, please visit [Clinical Recognition | Monkeypox | Poxvirus | CDC](#).¹

At this time, researchers are investigating how long the virus has been circulating outside of endemic areas; how the virus was introduced into some of the current clusters of cases; whether asymptomatic spread is possible; and whether the virus is being spread through contact with semen, vaginal fluids, or other body fluids not already listed. We are working with our partners to answer these and other questions.

Infection Prevention and Control

Patients with suspected or confirmed monkeypox infection should be placed in a single-person room. A negative pressure room is not necessary for monkeypox patients. Healthcare personnel entering the room should use a gown, gloves, eye protection, and an N95 or higher-level respirator. Intubation and extubation, and any procedures on patients likely to spread oral

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/clinicians/clinical-recognition.html>

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secretions, should be performed in an airborne infection isolation room. Information on [infection prevention and control in healthcare settings for patients with suspected or confirmed monkeypox infection](#)² is available.

Patients who do not require hospitalization for medical indications (including people who test positive for monkeypox or those waiting for monkeypox test results) may be [isolated at home using protective measures](#),³ such as wearing a well-fitting mask when in close contact with others. Individuals with extensive lesions that cannot be covered, have draining or weeping lesions or present with active respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, runny nose) should avoid contact with other family members, including pets. Patients who are contacts of people confirmed to have monkeypox should be monitored for symptoms for 21 days after their last exposure. Contacts who remain asymptomatic can be permitted to continue routine daily activities (e.g., go to work and school).

What CDC is doing

CDC is closely tracking all reported cases of orthopoxvirus (a group of viruses that include smallpox, cowpox, vaccinia, and monkeypox) and monkeypox, specifically. CDC is also working to raise awareness among frontline healthcare providers and public health officials and provide information about what infection with monkeypox looks like and how to manage the illness.

We are also raising awareness of the current situation with the public. CDC has resources that are available to help support these efforts, including a [website](#)⁴ with key information about monkeypox and a [fact sheet for people who are sexually active](#).⁵

What You Can Do

Helping people make the best-informed decisions to protect their health and the health of their community from monkeypox requires a combination of providing key prevention information to the public and working with community partners and trusted messengers to ensure that information reaches the affected groups.

Partners can help with messaging to specific communities and channels to increase awareness of monkeypox while reducing the chances of stigmatizing those who may have contact with the virus. It is important to emphasize that anyone, regardless of gender or sexual orientation, can develop and spread monkeypox. Many of those affected in the current global outbreaks identify as gay or bisexual men; however, the current risk of exposure to monkeypox is not exclusive to the gay and bisexual community.

It will take a partnership between healthcare providers, affected patients, and public health

² <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/clinicians/infection-control-healthcare.html>

³ <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/clinicians/infection-control-home.html>

⁴ <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/response/2022/index.html>

⁵ <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/pdf/MonkeyPox-sexually-active-InfoSheet-508.pdf>

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officials to educate and intervene with stigma-free care. We thank the LGBTQIA+ community and its medical and community service providers for helping us in our efforts to raise the visibility of the current situation and the steps people can take to protect their health and the health of others.

More information on the current situation of monkeypox in the United States can be found at [U.S. Monkeypox 2022: Situation Summary | Monkeypox | Poxvirus | CDC](#).⁴

Information about the monkeypox virus, specimen collection, treatment, and infection prevention and control can be found at [Information For Clinicians | Monkeypox | Poxvirus | CDC](#).⁶

Resources:

[U.S. Monkeypox 2022: Situation Summary | Monkeypox | Poxvirus | CDC](#)⁴

[Case Definition† | Monkeypox | Poxvirus | CDC](#)⁷

[Clinical Recognition | Monkeypox | Poxvirus | CDC](#)¹

[Infection Control: Healthcare Settings | Monkeypox | Poxvirus | CDC](#)²

Patient information

[Monkeypox: Get the Facts \(cdc.gov\)](#)⁵

⁶ <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/clinicians/index.html>

⁷ <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/clinicians/case-definition.html>