

DIVISION OF COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CONTROL

MONKEYPOX



June 6, 2022

Related Materials: [CDC Health Advisory](#) | [CDPH May 27 Health Advisory](#) | [CDPH May 20 Health Advisory](#) | [Monkeypox Q&A](#)

The current monkeypox situation is constantly evolving and subject to change.

CDPH is closely monitoring monkeypox transmission in the U.S. and California to ensure rapid identification of cases. **The risk of monkeypox to the public is currently very low based on the information available.**

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued a health advisory on May 20, 2022 regarding a confirmed case of monkeypox virus infection in Massachusetts as well as multiple clusters of monkeypox virus infections in other countries that do not usually have monkeypox cases. Many of the cases have occurred among persons self-identifying as men who have sex with men (MSM).

Additionally, CDPH issued an updated advisory on May 27 and also issued an advisory on May 20 to health care providers to immediately notify their local health jurisdiction (LHJ) of any potential cases.

Visit the CDC's webpage on Monkeypox in the United States and the CDPH Monkeypox Q&A page for more information.

Monkeypox in California

Number of Probable and Confirmed Cases
5

Data as of June 3, 2022

About Monkeypox

Monkeypox is a rare disease that is caused by infection with the monkeypox virus. Monkeypox virus belongs to the *Orthopoxvirus* genus which includes the variola (smallpox) virus as well as the vaccinia virus, which is used in the smallpox vaccine. Monkeypox is of public health concern because the illness is similar to smallpox and can be spread from infected humans, animals, and materials contaminated with the virus, but monkeypox is less transmissible than smallpox. Monkeypox was first identified in 1958 and occurs primarily in Central and West African countries. Monkeypox cases have occurred in the U.S. (mostly related to international travel or importation of animals) but they remain very rare here.

Symptoms

In humans, symptoms of monkeypox can be similar but milder than symptoms of smallpox.

Symptoms can begin with:

- Fever

- Headache
- Muscle aches
- Backache
- Swollen lymph nodes
- Chills
- Exhaustion

Within 1 to 3 days (sometimes longer) after the appearance of fever, the patient can develop a rash that progresses from being red and flat, to being a bump, to being water filled, to being pus-filled, to being a crust, often beginning on the face and then spreading to other parts of the body (like the extremities and genital areas).

The time from infection to symptoms for monkeypox is usually 7–14 days, but can range from 5–21 days. The illness typically lasts for 2–4 weeks.

Anyone who has symptoms of monkeypox, such as characteristic rashes or lesions, should contact a health care provider right away.

Transmission

Transmission of monkeypox virus occurs when a person comes into contact with the virus from an animal, human, or materials contaminated with the virus. The virus enters the body through broken skin (even if not visible), the respiratory tract, or the mucous membranes (eyes, nose, or mouth). Current risk factors for contracting monkeypox include those who:

1. Traveled (within 21 days) to an area where monkeypox cases or exposures have been reported;
2. Reported contact with a person who has a similar rash or received a diagnosis of confirmed or suspected monkeypox; and
3. Persons self-identifying as men who have sex with men (MSM).

Prevention

There are number of measures that can be taken to prevent infection with monkeypox virus:

- Isolate infected patients from others who could be at risk for infection.
- Practice good hand hygiene after contact with infected animals or humans. For example, washing your hands with soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid contact with animals that could harbor the virus (including animals that are sick or that have been found dead in areas where monkeypox occurs).
- Avoid direct contact with any materials, such as bedding or laundry, that has been in contact with a sick animal or patient. (Monkeypox virus can be killed with standard washing machine with warm water and detergent.)
- Use appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) when caring for patients, which includes gown, gloves, respirator, and eye protection.

Monkeypox vs. COVID-19

Although the sudden emergence of monkeypox can be alarming after two years of living through the COVID-19 pandemic, monkeypox is not a new virus and does not spread in the same way as COVID-19. The table below shows a comparison of monkeypox and COVID-19.

FAQ	Monkeypox	COVID-19
How widespread is it?	Typically found in or linked to central and western African countries. Since May 2022, hundreds of confirmed or suspected cases worldwide, and several in the U.S.	Hundreds of millions of cases since the start of the pandemic in early 2020, and still spreading widely throughout the world.

How serious is it?	Most cases are mild but can be severe and can also lead to death.	Cases range from mild to severe symptoms. Can also lead to death.
When was it first identified?	Not a new virus – around since 1958.	A novel virus - around since 2019.
How does it spread?	<p>By very close and/or prolonged contact with someone with symptoms, including through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close physical skin-to-skin contact • Large respiratory droplets spread by face-to-face interaction • Touching contaminated materials like bedding, towels, clothing or other objects <p>Monkeypox is much less contagious and spreads much slower than COVID-19.</p>	Through tiny droplets in the air by breathing, talking, sneezing, or coughing. Is extremely infectious. Can spread from others who have the virus, even if they don't have symptoms.
What are the signs and symptoms?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rash with firm bumps on face, hands, feet, body, or genitals • Fever • Swollen lymph nodes • Chills • Low energy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fever • Cough • Trouble breathing • Stomach issues • Headaches • Muscle aches • Loss of taste and smell • Cold symptoms
How is it prevented?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid close physical contact with people who have symptoms, including with sores or rashes • Avoid contact with infected animals, and contaminated materials • Wear PPE (mask, gloves, gown) if you can't avoid close contact with someone who has symptoms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get vaccinated and boosted • Wear a mask in indoor settings and crowded outdoor settings • Meet others outdoors or in well ventilated spaces
Are there variants?	<p>There are two known variants of monkeypox virus. The variant recently identified in Europe and in the U.S. is the West African strain causes less severe disease.</p> <p>All viruses change and evolve over time. However, the monkeypox virus mutates more slowly than coronaviruses and is not a concern currently.</p>	<p>There are many variants of SARS-CoV-2 (virus that causes COVID-19).</p> <p>This virus mutates rapidly.</p>

<p>If you have symptoms</p> <p>Both: Always stay home if you're sick.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Isolate from others• Contact a health care provider right away.• They may recommend a vaccine for those who are exposed.• Can also provide care for people who have symptoms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Get tested.• If you test positive, isolate from others• Contact a health care provider right away to talk about treatment options.
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