

Dutchess County Department of Behavioral & Community Health

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Public Health Alert

Tuesday, August 2, 2022 - 9 am

MONKEYPOX CASES IN DUTCHESS COUNTY

Dutchess County Department of Behavioral & Community Health (DBCH) has confirmed cases of monkeypox virus in County residents. Monkeypox is a rare disease caused by infection with the monkeypox virus, an orthopoxvirus in the same family as the virus that causes smallpox.

Monkeypox spreads through close, physical contact between people. The virus may also spread through contact with objects that were used by an infected person, such as clothing, bedding, or towels. While anyone can get it, the epidemiology of the current outbreak suggests certain populations are being affected more than others, including men who have sex with men (MSM).

Children aged 8 or under, and pregnant or immunocompromised individuals have a higher risk of severe illness or complications, but these are rare.

For suspect cases, healthcare providers are reminded to consider:

- Rash presentation, especially on genitals, hands, feet, torso, or face (plus or minus constitutional symptoms) particularly in the context of:
 - ▶ History of travel to areas where the virus is spreading. This would include New York City and the surrounding region.
 - ▶ Men who have sex with men (MSM) or patients with close contact/sexual activity with MSM.
- NYSDOH provider guidance regarding monkeypox testing can be found at: https://health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/zoonoses/monkeypox/providers/docs/lab_testing_guidance.pdf. **While not considered a sexually transmitted infection (STI), concomitant STI testing is recommended, if suggested by the clinical picture.**

Vaccination and treatment:

- At this time, only individuals who are early in the course of infection or who have had a recent documented exposure may be eligible to receive the approved monkeypox vaccine (JYNNEOS). To see if your case may qualify, contact DBCH at (845) 486-3402.
- Tecovirimat (TPOXX), an antiviral, is only considered for patients at risk of severe illness (e.g., small children, pregnant patients, severe immune compromise).

Please remember:

- **A person is considered contagious until all lesions have healed over with intact skin.** Follow your institution's PPE strategy to protect yourself (mask, eye protection, gloves, gown, as appropriate).
- **NYS Public Health Law requires healthcare providers to report any suspected viral monkeypox/orthopox virus cases. To report suspected cases, call the Department at (845) 486-3402.**