

Dept. of Health Services: Identifies second case of monkeypox in a Wisconsin resident

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On July 9, 2022, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) identified the second confirmed case of orthopoxvirus, presumed to be monkeypox, in a resident of Milwaukee County. The patient is currently isolating, and DHS is working with federal and local partners to identify people who have been in contact with that person. As of July 8, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported 767 confirmed monkeypox and orthopoxvirus cases in the United States. While the number of confirmed monkeypox cases is growing in the United States, the overall risk to the general public remains low.

“DHS continues to work closely with federal, state, and local partners to monitor the current outbreak of monkeypox in the United States and here in Wisconsin,” said DHS Secretary-Designee Karen Timberlake. “We want the public to know that the risk of widespread transmission remains low. Current evidence from around the country shows that the virus is spreading mostly through close, intimate contact with someone who has monkeypox. We urge all Wisconsinites to stay vigilant and contact a doctor if you develop a new or unexplained rash.”

Monkeypox is a rare but potentially serious disease caused by the monkeypox virus. It is typically characterized by a new, unexplained rash and skin lesions. Other early symptoms of monkeypox include fever, chills, and swollen lymph nodes. Recently identified cases have developed skin lesions in the genital, groin, and anal regions that might be confused with rashes caused by common diseases such as herpes and syphilis.

Most people with monkeypox recover in two to four weeks without needing

treatment. However, vaccinations and antiviral medications can be used to prevent and treat monkeypox. People who had known exposure to someone with monkeypox should talk with a doctor or nurse to learn if they are eligible to receive a vaccine. This includes people who were specifically identified as someone who had close or intimate in-person contact with someone with the characteristic monkeypox rash, or someone with a probable or confirmed monkeypox diagnosis. Studies from previous outbreaks also suggest that smallpox vaccine received decades ago may provide protection from infection or decrease severity of disease.

It is important to know that monkeypox does not spread easily from person to person. The virus is transmitted through respiratory droplets, sustained skin-to-skin contact, and contact with items that have been contaminated with the fluids or sores of a person with monkeypox. While anyone can develop monkeypox infection if they have close contact with someone who is sick, the CDC reports that most cases in the U.S have occurred among gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men.

To prevent the spread of monkeypox, DHS encourages all Wisconsinites to be aware of the following:

- Know the [symptoms](#) and risk factors of monkeypox. Anyone with a rash that looks like monkeypox should talk to a doctor or nurse about whether they need to get tested, even if they don't think they had contact with someone who has monkeypox.
- Avoid skin-to-skin contact with people who are showing a rash or skin sores. Don't touch the rash or scabs, and don't kiss, hug, cuddle, have sex, or share items such as eating utensils or bedding with someone with monkeypox.
- In jurisdictions with known monkeypox spread, participating in activities with close, personal, skin-to-skin contact may pose a higher risk of exposure.
- If you were recently exposed to the virus, contact a doctor or nurse to talk about whether you need a vaccine to prevent disease. Monitor your health for fever, chills, swollen lymph nodes and a new, unexplained rash, and contact a health care provider if any of those occur. If you become ill, avoid contact with others until you receive health care.

DHS also urges all clinicians to remain alert to patients with compatible rashes and encourage them to test for monkeypox. Anyone can develop and spread this disease. For free, confidential support finding health care and community resources near you, dial 211 or 877-947-2211, or text your ZIP code to 898-211. Find



resources online at 211Wisconsin.org(link is external).