

Dept. of Health Services: Identifies the first case of Monkeypox in a Wisconsin resident

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On June 30, 2022, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) identified the first confirmed case of orthopoxvirus, presumed to be monkeypox, in a resident of Dane County. The patient is currently isolating and the risk remains low for the general public. As of June 30, there have been 396 confirmed monkeypox and orthopoxvirus cases in the United States due to this outbreak. DHS, federal, state, and local partners are working closely together to investigate and monitor the current monkeypox outbreak.

“The number of monkeypox cases continues to rise in the U.S., so it is not a surprise that monkeypox has now been detected in Wisconsin,” said Chief Medical Officer Dr. Ryan Westergaard. “While it’s likely that additional cases will be found among Wisconsinites, we are relieved that this disease does not spread easily from person to person. We’d like for all clinicians to remain alert to patients with compatible rashes and encourage them to test for monkeypox. We want the public to know that the risk of widespread transmission remains low.”

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.

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. Anyone can develop and spread this disease after being exposed to the virus. However, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that most cases of monkeypox in the U.S. have occurred among gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men (MSM).

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

- Know the [symptoms](#) and risk factors of 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.

The DHS [Outbreaks in Wisconsin](#) webpage will be updated with the latest case counts of monkeypox.

DHS continues to work closely with local public health, health care providers, and the CDC to monitor the current outbreak and provide guidance to mitigate risk. DHS urges all Wisconsinites to contact a doctor or nurse immediately if they develop any unexpected skin lesions or rashes. 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\(link is external\)](#)