

July 28, 2022

Monkeypox (hMPXV) update

Monkeypox (hMPXV) is spreading rapidly in Oregon, rising from five to 32 cases over the past month. Cases of hMPXV have been identified in Lane, Multnomah, Washington and Clackamas counties. Clackamas County currently has 2 confirmed cases. Nationally, more than 4,600 hMPXV [cases have been confirmed](#) in 46 states and worldwide, over 20,600 cases in over 70 countries can be attributed to the current outbreak. The hMPXV virus is not limited to one community or another, anyone is susceptible to the virus.

Currently, the majority of cases currently in the U.S. and in Oregon have been among sexually active men. hMPXV is a known virus that has caused small outbreaks in the U.S. over the last few decades. hMPXV is a viral zoonosis (a virus transmitted to humans from animals) with symptoms similar to those seen in the past in smallpox patients, although it is clinically less severe; most individuals recover without treatment.

In relative terms, hMPXV is not very transmissible and will not spread like COVID-19. Studies are currently underway to further understand the epidemiology, sources of infection, and transmission patterns. [Track U.S. cases here.](#)

Transmission

After a human is infected, they can infect other humans through several avenues:

- Skin-to-skin contact with the rash/sores
- Respiratory droplets, during extended face-to-face contact
- Contact with bodily fluids
- Contact with fluid from the pox
- Contaminated bedding or clothing with extended exposures

Prevention

Surveillance and rapid identification of new cases is critical for outbreak containment. During human hMPXV outbreaks, close contact with infected persons is the most significant risk factor for hMPXV virus infection.

- Avoid sex or other intimate contact if you or your partner have new skin lesions, fever, swollen lymph nodes or otherwise suspect exposure to hMPXV. Condoms do not prevent the spread of the virus (but do prevent spread of other infections).
- Avoid contact with materials such as bedding that have been used for an extended period of time by someone infected
- Wash hands thoroughly if you have contact with someone with hMPXV.
- If you get symptoms, isolate yourself at home until you can connect with a health care provider

Signs and Symptoms

Once someone is infected they can be sick for 2-4 weeks. The infection period is categorized [into two periods](#):

1. Prodromal period (0-5 days)- people typically present flu-like symptoms:

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|-----------------------|----------------|
| • Fever | • Headache |
| • Swollen lymph nodes | • Muscle aches |
| • Chills | • Fatigue |

2. Rash period (within 1-3 days of fever): A distinctive rash typically starts in the face, which then moves to extremities. The rash starts as raised bumps that then fill with fluid (clear to cloudy), turn into open sores, then scab

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over and disappear. This process usually takes 2-4 weeks. The rash can occur anywhere on the body, including face, hands, genital area, and around the anus. For visual examples of hMPXV rash, [click here](#).

Testing and Treatment

Testing: Testing for hMPXV is available. Ask a health care provider about testing if you develop a new rash/bumps/sores, especially if you know you have been in contact with anyone with the infection.

Vaccines: At this time, limited vaccines are available for specific high-risk contacts. The vaccines are effective at protecting people against hMPXV before exposure, but vaccine supply does not support this use at this time. However, it can also prevent disease or make it less severe after exposure. The CDC recommends the vaccine be given within four days of exposure if possible to prevent onset of the disease. It can be given up to 14 days after exposure to reduce the symptoms.

Treatment: Effective therapeutics have already been developed but not widely available. The antiviral ST-246 (tercovirimat), for example, was developed specifically for smallpox but works for all orthopoxviruses including hMPXV.

Other mitigation measures: COVID-19 mitigation measures, like masks and improved ventilation and filtration, will help with reducing spread.

See the Clackamas County Public Health Department [hMPXV webpage](#) for more information and resources.