

**Animal Health Alert: Human Monkeypox in the U.S. – Guidance for Veterinarians**  
**5.25.2022**

**Key Points:**

- Veterinarians and their staff should be aware of the recent ongoing [outbreak of human cases](#) of monkeypox – the first human case in the U.S. has now been [confirmed](#).
- The ongoing situation may result in an increased risk of exposure of pets to persons who have confirmed monkeypox or have been potentially exposed to monkeypox.
- Veterinarians should consider all mammals susceptible to monkeypox and be aware that the disease may transmit between animals, and between humans and animals, via direct contact, respiratory droplets, and indirect contact with contaminated materials or fomites.
- Any suspect animal should be isolated and reported to Veterinary Public Health immediately by calling 213-288-7060.

Dear Colleagues,

On May 18, 2022, a U.S. resident tested positive for monkeypox after returning to the U.S. from Canada. As of May 18, 2022, no additional monkeypox cases have been identified in the U.S. Scientists at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are collaborating with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health to investigate this situation. CDC is also tracking multiple clusters of monkeypox that were reported in early to mid-May in several non-endemic countries, including in Europe and North America.

**Current Situation:**

Monkeypox is a zoonotic infection endemic to several Central and West African countries. The wild animal reservoir is unknown. Before May 2022, cases outside of Africa were reported either among people with recent travel to Nigeria or contact with a person with a confirmed monkeypox virus infection. However, in May 2022, nine patients were confirmed with monkeypox in England; six were among persons without a history of travel to Africa and the source of these infections is unknown.

It's not clear how people in those clusters were exposed to monkeypox but cases include people who self-identify as men who have sex with men. CDC is urging healthcare providers in the U.S. to be alert for patients who have rash illnesses consistent with monkeypox, regardless of whether they have travel or specific risk factors for monkeypox and regardless of gender or sexual orientation.

**Susceptible Species:**

Several species of primates and rodents (including rats, mice, squirrels, and prairie dogs) are known to be susceptible to infection with monkeypox virus. Because the types of animals that may become ill with monkeypox are currently unknown, all mammals (including dogs and cats) should be considered susceptible as a precaution.

**Transmission, Clinical Signs, and Treatment:**

The route of transmission of monkeypox virus in humans can be through bites from animals, aerosols, or by direct contact with lesions, blood, or body fluids from an infected person or animal. Although historically most cases of monkeypox are zoonotic and occur after contact with an infected animal, human-to-human transmission is responsible for current case clusters. Person-to-person spread likely occurs as a result of skin-to-skin contact or in aerosols. The monkeypox virus can also be spread on fomites (such as contaminated bedding, clothing or linens).

The route of transmission in animals is less well understood. The route of transmission from animal-to-animal may occur through respiratory droplets, inhalation of aerosolized virus or organic matter containing virus particles (e.g., via the disturbance of virus in contaminated bedding), skin abrasions, the eye, or through the ingestion of infected animal tissues.

Reported incubation period may range from 3 days to 2 weeks in experimentally infected animals. The predominant syndrome in non-human primates is a self-limiting rash, which begins with hair loss and small cutaneous papules that develop into pustules. The number of lesions may vary from few individual pocks to extensive, coalescing lesions. Other clinical signs may include fever, respiratory, ocular, oral, and systemic signs.

Treatment consists of supportive care.

**Recommendations for Veterinarians:**

If a client contacts you and based on their pet's history and/or symptoms, you suspect that their pet has symptoms of monkeypox and was exposed to another animal or human with monkeypox:

- Contact Veterinary Public Health (VPH) immediately at 213-288-7060
- DO NOT have the owner bring their pet to your clinic
- Advise the owner to isolate their pet at home, separated from other people and animals
- Advise the owner to NOT take their animal to a shelter or release it into the wild.

If you suspect an animal **at your facility** may have monkeypox or may have been exposed to an animal or human with monkeypox:

- Immediately isolate/quarantine the animal
- Contact VPH immediately (call 213-288-7060)
- Complete and submit the VPH animal disease reporting form:  
<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/vet/docs/Forms/AnimalDiseaseDeath.pdf>.

If examining an animal with suspected monkeypox, veterinarians and staff should use universal precautions including appropriate hand hygiene, personal protective equipment (PPE) such as gloves, gown, N-95 respirator, eye protection, waste disposal, environmental cleaning, and laundry. Information on these infection prevention and control measures is provided on the [CDC Website](#).

**For More Information:**

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Monkeypox - Current situation <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/outbreak/current.html>
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Monkeypox - General. <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/index.html>
3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Monkeypox – Information for Veterinarians. <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/veterinarian/index.html>
4. Center for Food Security and Public Health, Monkeypox Technical Factsheet <https://www.cfsph.iastate.edu/Factsheets/pdfs/monkeypox.pdf>
5. National Association of State and Public Health Veterinarians (NASPHV), Veterinary Standard Precautions <http://www.nasphv.org/Documents/VeterinaryStandardPrecautions.pdf>
6. Los Angeles County Veterinary Public Health, Monkeypox FAQ for Pet Owners <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/vet/docs/MonkeypoxFAQPetOwner.pdf>
7. Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Monkeypox <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/Monkeypox.htm>

Sincerely,

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