



IRI ALERT

AUGUST 2022

2022 Monkeypox Outbreak

Situational overview

- Monkeypox is an orthopoxvirus, a family that includes smallpox. Symptoms include fever, chills, headaches, muscle aches, fatigue, swollen lymph nodes, and a painful rash of raised bumps that tends to be distributed on the face, extremities, and genitals.
- Since early May 2022, cases of monkeypox have been reported in countries where the disease is not endemic and continue to be reported in several endemic countries. The origin of the current spread is still unclear and does not appear to be linked to countries where the virus has been historically endemic.
- The strain of monkeypox spreading is estimated to have a low fatality rate (1-3%), and many infected people are reporting “relatively mild” symptoms, with as few as one lesion during infection.
- Monkeypox vaccines exist and have been approved for use since 2019; however, there is a shortage due to high demand from countries where the virus is not historically reported (Europe, North America, South America).

Monkeypox transmission

- Monkeypox mainly spreads through direct skin-to-skin contact, via exposure to infectious lesions, as well as through soiled linens and contaminated surfaces.
- While there is some discussion about monkeypox being sexually transmitted, transmission via bodily fluids has not yet been confirmed. Studies around this are ongoing.
- Monkeypox does not linger in the air like COVID-19; however, transmission via respiratory droplet particles can occur during prolonged face-to-face contact.
- The incubation period ranges from 5-21 days and the illness typically lasts for 2-4 weeks. The infectious period lasts until all scabs or crusts have fallen off, though may extend longer for some.

Monkeypox in the United States

- First Confirmed Case – Reported to CDC on May 17, 2022
- Declared as Public Health Emergency – August 4, 2022
- Current Confirmed Cases – 8,934 reported to CDC as of August 8, 2022
- Zero deaths reported (11 total deaths globally among 29,833 cases)

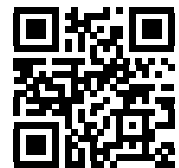
Note: These numbers are likely significantly underrepresenting the actual case count due to limited access to testing, lag time in case confirmation, knowledge gaps among providers, and stigma that may make individuals reluctant to seek medical care.

Considerations for employers

- Set up a steering committee tasked with driving decisions and operationalizing plans should an outbreak (among your workforce or the broader community) occur.
 - Assign a member of the team to regularly check public health resources in order to stay up-to-date on the latest developments and recommendations and develop messaging for a variety of uses. These resources include (but are not limited to):
 - [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
 - [Transmission Resources](#)
 - [Fact Sheet for Destigmatizing Language and Effectively Disseminating Messaging](#)
 - [CDC Videos About Monkeypox Spread](#)
- Communicate with your employees about what you're doing to stay in line with the evolving guidance and ensure they remain safe and protected from all infectious diseases while at work.
- If appropriate, develop and promote internal messaging to counteract misinformation and help destigmatize monkeypox. Coordinate with public health organizations, public health clinics, providers, and LGBTQIA+ organizations in order to learn firsthand how transmission and messaging is evolving and how those organizations are handling the outbreak.
- Consider developing a handout for visitors/customers with information to help allay concerns that may be stoked via the news or social media. Post similar messaging on your public-facing website and social media channels for those who may have concerns about entering your facility.
- Develop contingency staffing plans to prevent any major disruption in operations. Should an outbreak occur in your workplace, some employees would be unable to work for weeks.
- Ensure your HR team has the latest information and is trained on how to speak with employees who may have questions or concerns. Additionally, HR teams should consider how benefits would cover long absences for employees, in the event of an outbreak.
- Ensure employees have an adequate supply of PPE should health agencies determine that it has become necessary.

For more information, scan the QR code with your phone or visit:

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