

NMDOH reports probable monkeypox case in state

Written by Staff Reports
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SANTA FE - The New Mexico Department of Health reported the state's first probable case of monkeypox in New Mexico on July 11. The patient returned from out-of-state travel and was likely exposed through contact. Initial testing was completed the night of July 8 by the DOH Scientific Laboratory Division and confirmatory testing is being completed at Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The individual is doing well and isolating at home.

“Monkeypox is a very rare disease in the United States, and it’s important to keep in perspective that monkeypox does not spread as easily among people,” Acting Department of Health Secretary, David R. Scrase, M.D., said. “While the risk for most people remains low, anyone who has close contact with someone with monkeypox is at risk of infection, which makes this a public health concern for all of us.”

Monkeypox symptoms usually start within 21 days of exposure to the virus. Infection begins with flu-like symptoms, such as fever, headache, muscle aches and backache, swollen lymph nodes, chills, or exhaustion. Infection then progresses to rash or sores, often on the hands, feet, chest, face or genitals. Most infections last two to four weeks, and people should isolate at home until they are no longer infectious. A person is no longer infectious once all the scabs have fallen off and a fresh layer of skin has formed.

Monkeypox can spread to anyone through close, personal, often skin-to-skin contact, including:

Direct contact with monkeypox rash, sores, or scabs from a person with monkeypox.

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Contact with objects, fabrics (clothing, bedding, or towels), and surfaces that have been used by someone with monkeypox.

Contact with respiratory secretions, through kissing and other face-to-face contact.

Individuals with any monkeypox symptoms should immediately isolate and contact their healthcare provider to get tested. Before the visit, they should notify their healthcare provider that they are concerned about monkeypox. If you don't have a provider or health insurance, you can find a Public Health Office near you and call to make an appointment: <https://www.nmhealth.org/location/public/>

If you have been exposed to monkeypox, the CDC recommends a smallpox/monkeypox vaccine that can help prevent or reduce symptoms of the disease.

Monkeypox symptoms can also mimic syphilis, which is a more common infection. You can find free testing for syphilis and other sexually transmitted disease via the state website at www.nmstdtest.org or in Spanish at <https://espanol.nmhivguide.org/syphilis.php>.

More information about monkeypox can also be found on NMHealth.org at <https://www.nmhealth.org/about/phd/idb/mpv/> and on the CDC webpage <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/>

Additional information for providers can also be found on the CDC's Health Alert Network page.

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