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City, State public health officials confirm first probable case of monkeypox virus in Illinois

Patient is doing well, the probable case poses little risk to general public

CHICAGO - The Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) and Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), announced today a single presumptive monkeypox case in an adult male Chicago resident with recent travel history to Europe.

Initial testing was completed Wednesday, June 1, 2022, at an IDPH laboratory, and confirmatory testing for monkeypox is pending at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Based on initial epidemiologic characteristics and the positive orthopoxvirus result at IDPH, health officials consider this a probable monkeypox infection.

CDPH and IDPH are working closely with the CDC and the patient's health care providers to identify individuals with whom the patient may have been in contact while they were infectious. This contact tracing approach is appropriate given the nature and transmission of the virus. The person did not require hospitalization and is isolating at home in good condition. To protect patient confidentiality, no further details relating to the patient will be disclosed.

The case remains isolated and at this time there is no indication there is a great risk of extensive local spread of the virus, as monkeypox does not spread as easily as the COVID-19 virus. Person to person transmission is possible through close physical contact with body fluids, monkeypox sores, items that have been contaminated with fluids or sores (clothing, bedding, etc.), or through respiratory droplets following prolonged face-to-face contact.

Monkeypox is a rare, but potentially serious viral illness, which belongs to the Orthopoxvirus family, and typically begins with flu-like symptoms and swelling of the lymph nodes, and progresses to a rash on the face and body. Most infections last 2 to 4 weeks. Monkeypox is typically endemic to parts of central and west Africa, and people can be exposed through bites or scratches from rodents and small mammals, preparing wild game, or having contact with an infected animal or possibly animal products.

Beginning in 2022, multiple cases of monkeypox have been reported in several countries that do not normally report monkeypox, including the United States. On May 18, 2022, a U.S.

resident tested positive for monkeypox after returning to the U.S. from Canada. As of June 2, 2022, the CDC reports 19 confirmed cases of orthopox/monkeypox across multiple states including California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Massachusetts, New York, Utah, Virginia, and Washington. <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/response/2022/index.html>. Anyone, regardless of sexual orientation, can spread monkeypox, but early data from this outbreak suggest that gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men make up a high number of initial cases.

According to federal health officials, clinicians should consider a diagnosis of monkeypox in people who present with a consistent rash, especially if they 1) had contact with someone who had a rash that looks like monkeypox or someone who was diagnosed with confirmed or probable monkeypox, 2) had skin-to-skin-contact with someone in a social network experiencing monkeypox activity; this includes men who have sex with men who meet partners through an online website, digital application (app), or social event (e.g., a bar or party), 3) traveled outside the US to a country with confirmed cases of monkeypox or where monkeypox activity has been ongoing, or 4) had contact with a dead or live wild animal or exotic pet that exists only in Africa or used a product derived from such animals (e.g., game meat, creams, lotions, powders, etc.).

People who have a new or unexplained rash, sores, or symptoms, or have a confirmed exposure should see a healthcare provider, remind them that the virus is circulating in the community, and avoid sex or being intimate with anyone until they have been seen. If a person or their partner has monkeypox, they should follow the treatment and prevention recommendations outlined by their healthcare provider and avoid sex or being intimate with anyone until all sores have healed or have a fresh layer of skin formed.

Suspected cases may present with early flu-like symptoms and progress to lesions that may begin on one site on the body and spread to other parts. Illness could be clinically confused with a sexually transmitted infection like syphilis or herpes, or with varicella zoster virus.

For more about this virus, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/> and <https://chi.gov/monkeypox>.

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