

ALERT:

CONFIRMED MONKEYPOX CASES IN NEW MEXICO

Safety Message from Poms and Associates, Risk Management Consultants for NMPSIA

The World Health Organization recently declared the rapid spread of Monkeypox virus a global health emergency and New Mexico is now included on the list of states with confirmed cases. In addition, all our neighboring states now have multiple confirmed cases. With that in mind, it's important to understand exactly what monkeypox is, what you can be doing to prevent it, and what to do if a case is confirmed in your school or district.

(For more on where cases have been reported to date, you can check the CDC's [U.S. Map and Case Count website](#)).

Monkeypox is a rare disease caused by infection with the monkeypox virus, which is part of the same family of viruses as smallpox. Monkeypox symptoms resemble smallpox symptoms, although they are usually milder and less fatal. According to the New Mexico Department of Health, 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 2-4 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 is formed. Anyone who has been in close contact with someone who has monkeypox is at risk.

The CDC offers the following suggestions on both preventing and identifying the disease.

PREVENTION

- Avoid close, skin to skin contact with the monkeypox rash.
 - » Do not touch the rash or scabs of person with monkeypox.
 - » Do not kiss, hug, or cuddle anyone with monkeypox.
 - » Do not share eating utensils or cups.
- Do not handle or touch the bedding, towels, or clothing of a sick person.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, especially after contact with sick people.

A person who is sick with monkeypox should isolate at home. If they have an active rash or other symptoms, they should be in a separate room or area from other family members and pets when possible. (For travelers, see: [Travel Health Notice for Monkeypox in Multiple Countries](#)).

IDENTIFICATION AND COURSE OF ACTION

Anyone with a rash that [looks like monkeypox](#) should talk to their healthcare provider, even if they don't think they had contact with someone who has monkeypox. People who may be at higher risk might include but are not limited to those who:

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.
3. Traveled outside the US to a country with confirmed cases of monkeypox or where monkeypox activity has been ongoing
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.)
5. Are close personal contacts of people with monkeypox
6. May have been exposed to the virus
7. May have increased risk of being exposed to the virus, such as people who perform laboratory testing to diagnose monkeypox

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [New Mexico Department of Health](#)
- [CDC Monkeypox Website](#)
- [Exposure Risk Assessment and Public Health Recommendations](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)