

Monkeypox (MPX)

Information for ACT Clinicians

Key Points (updates in red text)

- **As of 31 May 2022, a total of 557 confirmed cases have been reported worldwide from non-endemic countries.**
- **Cases have occurred among men who have sex with men as well as other people.**
- **Three cases** have been reported in Australia to date.
- Clinicians who suspect monkeypox are advised to immediately contact the on-call Microbiologist at the Canberra Hospital to discuss the case and management.
- **As of 28 May 2022, Monkeypox is a notifiable condition in the ACT – clinicians must immediately notify ACT Health if they identify or suspect that a patient has monkeypox.**

What is the situation?

- A multi-country outbreak of monkeypox is ongoing since early May.
- **As of 31 May 2022, 557 confirmed cases have been [reported worldwide](#) from 25 countries where the infection is not endemic, including the UK (n=179), Spain (n=120), Portugal (n=96), Canada (n=26), the Netherlands (n=26), Germany (n=21), France (n=17) and the United States (n=15).**
- **Cases have occurred among men who have sex with men as well as other people.**
- Monkeypox is a rare zoonotic viral infection usually associated with travel to west and central Africa.
- **As of 2 June 2022, there are three confirmed cases in Australia, one in Victoria and two in NSW. Two of these cases are associated with recent travel to Europe.**
- **As of 28 May 2022, Monkeypox is a notifiable condition in the ACT. It is a Group A notifiable condition under the [Code of Practice](#), which requires immediate notification to ACT Health by telephone, followed by written notification within 5 days.**

How does monkeypox present?

- Initial symptoms of monkeypox include fever, malaise, headache, myalgia and sometimes sore throat, cough and lymphadenopathy.
- Following initial symptoms, a rash develops (**usually within 1-3 days after fever commences**). Lesions may first begin in the mouth and spread to the face, arms and legs. **A notable symptom of this international outbreak is that the rash may first appear in the genital area.**
- The rash changes and goes through different stages. Lesions start as a macular rash, that develops into papules, vesicles, then pustules which crust and fall off.

- The rash can look similar in appearance to chickenpox, but at different stages or locations may also resemble other diseases which may be considered as differential diagnoses including syphilis or herpes simplex.
- Images of rash lesions observed in recent cases in the UK can be found on the [UK Health Security Agency monkeypox webpage](#).

How is monkeypox transmitted?

- Infections in humans can result from direct contact with the blood, bodily fluids, or cutaneous or mucosal lesions of infected animals. In Africa, evidence of monkeypox virus infection has been found in many animals.
- Person-to-person transmission can occur and is mainly through direct contact of lesion material, or via respiratory droplets.
- Monkeypox has not previously been described as a sexually transmitted infection though it can be passed on by direct contact during sex, and through contact with clothing or linens used by a person who has monkeypox.

How to manage a suspect monkeypox case

- Clinicians are asked to look out for signs and symptoms consistent with monkeypox particularly in returned travellers or persons with a clinically compatible rash.
- **Public messaging has advised individuals with symptoms to stay at home and phone their GP clinic to organise a telehealth appointment in the first instance, or phone the Canberra Sexual Health Clinic on (02) 5124 2184.**
- If a face-to-face consultation is undertaken, the clinician should use standard, contact and droplet precautions. In addition, because of the theoretical risk of airborne transmission, airborne precautions should be used whenever possible.
 - The clinician should wear a long-sleeved gown, gloves, protective eyewear and P2/N95 mask if available, otherwise a surgical mask is appropriate. The patient should be asked to wear a surgical mask and avoid waiting in the waiting room.
 - The patient should be seen in a single room (or negative pressure room in hospital settings).
 - **Care should be taken with room cleaning, waste disposal and laundering of towels or linens that have come in contact with a patient suspected to have monkeypox. Contaminated clothing and linen should not be shaken or handled in a manner that may disperse infectious particles. PPE as described above should be worn while removing linen, cleaning and disinfecting the patient environment. For more information, see the guidance from the [US Communicable Disease Control and Prevention](#).**
- If monkeypox is suspected, **immediately contact the on-call Microbiologist** through the Canberra Hospital switchboard to discuss the case, testing and initial management.
 - **Specimen collection can be initiated if monkeypox is suspected (please ensure that all cases who are referred for monkeypox testing are discussed with the on-call Microbiologist prior to sending samples)**
 - Take two swabs from at least two skin lesions to allow for testing for monkeypox and other infections such as varicella and herpes simplex.
 - Carefully de-roof vesicles and rub the base of the lesion vigorously.
 - Swab types can include dry swab, viral (green) swab, flocked swab in viral transport media/liquid Amies.
 - Ensure that specimen lids are secure and place into two biological specimen bags.

- Monkeypox is usually a mild, self-limiting illness and most people recover within a few weeks, although it can cause serious illness, and even death in a small number of people.

Further information

Please contact **ACT Health Communicable Disease Control** for more information or to report a suspected or confirmed case:

- Phone: 02 5124 9213
- Email: cdc@act.gov.au
- Fax: 02 5124 8810
- After-hours pager: 02 9962 4155

Additional information

More information is available from:

- [World Health Organisation – Monkeypox](#)
- [Centres for Disease Control and Prevention \(US CDC\) - Monkeypox](#)
- [UK Health Security Agency - Monkeypox](#)

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