

2022 Monkeypox Outbreak

JULY 14, 2022

North Carolina's Response Plan

This document provides an overview of monkeypox and the response by the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services and our partners.



Introduction and Background

In May, an outbreak of monkeypox was reported in the United Kingdom. Cases occurred around the globe in the next weeks. Massachusetts reported the first U.S. case later that month. Our State Laboratory of Public Health identified North Carolina's first case on June 23. The State Lab and private labs have ample supplies to test for monkeypox and we are receiving and allocating vaccine to those individuals who qualify.

NCDHHS and providers, local health departments and community groups are working to protect people from monkeypox and slow spread of this disease. To do this, the department and its partners are sharing information about monkeypox and what behaviors make people at a higher risk of getting monkey pox. People with symptoms are encouraged to get tested, isolate and talk to their health care provider about treatment. In addition, health departments identify contacts of infected people and offer them vaccines.

On June 28, the federal government made more vaccines available to protect people with more risk for catching monkeypox. This document details North Carolina's plan to distribute vaccine and slow the spread of disease.

WHAT IS MONKEYPOX?

Monkeypox is a rare disease caused by an orthopox virus. Prior to the 2022 outbreak, nearly all monkeypox cases in people outside of Africa were linked to international travel to countries where the disease commonly occurs.

Early symptoms can include fever, exhaustion and headache, and sometimes a sore throat and cough. A rash that can look like pimples or blisters appears shortly after. This happens over two to three weeks. More information is available [online](#).

HOW DOES MONKEYPOX SPREAD?

The virus is spread from person to person through skin-to-skin contact, infected saliva, respiratory droplets or fluid from the lesions. These body fluids may also contaminate linens or other items that they touch. The period from exposure to first symptoms is usually seven to 14 days but can range from five to 21 days. People can spread monkeypox from the start of symptoms, before the rash forms, until the lesions crust over and heal.

WHO IS AT RISK?

Anyone can get monkeypox. Many of the cases in this outbreak so far have been in men who have sex with men and transgender individuals. Sex can have a lot of close skin-to-skin contact, making it a riskier activity for spreading the virus. People who have more than one sexual partner in an area or venue where monkeypox is spreading are at higher risk of getting infected. For an update on the spread of the virus, visit the CDC map of monkeypox spread. Some cases have been tied to venue and events like sex parties and saunas where intimate, often anonymous sexual contact with multiple partners may occur.

North Carolina Response

NCDHHS launched its planned response when the first cases emerged in the United Kingdom. NCDHHS distributed [guidance for providers](#) on how to identify and test for monkeypox. Information on the virus was updated on the [NCDHHS website](#). The state lab started its testing protocols. NCDHHS, local health departments and providers began contact identification, tracing, and notification. Vaccines were offered to those exposed to the disease.

TESTING

Testing is available through a health care provider or local health department. The State Laboratory of Public Health tests these samples. Some commercial labs and academic medical centers can also test for monkeypox including LabCorp and the Mayo Clinic. There is no shortage of testing supplies, and people with symptoms of monkeypox should go to their health care provider or a local health department to get tested.

TREATMENT

While no medicine is specifically developed for monkeypox infections, treatment is available. Medications developed for similar viruses may be used to treat severe cases. Discuss treatment options with your health care provider.

VACCINE

JYNNEOS is a vaccine that prevents or reduces the severity of monkeypox. It must be given within 14 days after exposure. It can also be given before exposure to those at high risk. People need to have two doses of the vaccine. A second vaccine that is approved for prevention of smallpox, ACAM2000, also protects against monkeypox. It has higher risks than JYNNEOS. It is not recommended for people who have some skin diseases, a compromised immune system, or a range of other conditions.

Criteria for receiving vaccine may change. As of this update, vaccine will go first to known contacts of confirmed cases to prevent disease (post-exposure prophylaxis). Limited vaccines are available for gay or bisexual men or transgender individuals who had multiple sex partners or anonymous sex in the last 14 days.

PHASE 1

People who had close contact with cases in North Carolina are being offered JYNNEOS vaccine. On July 6, vaccine began arriving in the state. Initially seven health departments received vaccine: Buncombe, Durham, Forsyth, Mecklenburg, New Hanover, Pitt, and Wake. Vaccine is transferred as needed to other health departments, sites or tribal populations.

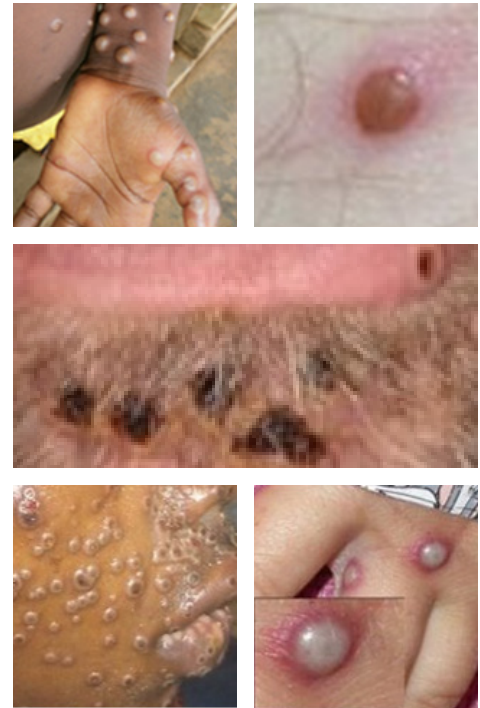
Contact tracing is a critical part of Phase 1 response, as vaccine will go first to known contacts of confirmed cases. Vaccine is also administered to people who meet the above criteria and are at higher risk. Vaccinations are recorded in the North Carolina Immunization Registry.

PHASE 2A

A second allocation of JYNNEOS vaccines was made available in mid-July and will include enough vaccines for about 960 people statewide. Vaccine will be prioritized for people who received a first dose in Phase 1 and to those higher at risk according to the above criteria. In addition, certain laboratory, healthcare, and public health response personnel will be eligible for JYNNEOS vaccines.

The same seven health departments will receive vaccines in phase 2a. These health departments will share vaccine with other local health departments as needed and with major providers of HIV treatment and services to bring vaccine closer to more state residents.

Additional monkeypox vaccine doses are expected by the end of summer. This may expand NCDHHS' ability to vaccinate more people who may be at higher risk for exposure to the virus. Further guidance for who is eligible will be available from the CDC.



How We Are Sharing Information About Monkeypox

NCDHHS shares facts about monkeypox, its spread, and its prevention in many ways. Materials serve a wide range of knowledge and expertise.

PROVIDERS

The first provider communication on monkeypox was sent on May 20 alerting medical care providers to the outbreak. The communication detailed the symptoms, the rash, and the procedure to collect samples for testing. [Provider communications](#) are updated and sent as conditions change.

LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS

Local health departments worked to facilitate testing and to identify and trace contacts who may have been exposed. Counties that identified positive cases coordinated with NCDHHS to plan their public announcements. NCDHHS provided a toolkit with social media posts, talking points and frequently asked questions. Guidelines for administering the vaccine were included. NCDHHS shares ongoing situation updates and talking points.

COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATIONS

People in the community trust organizations that they know and turn to those organization for information. NCDHHS worked with existing partners in the LGBTQ+ community, those who serve clients in the HIV Medication Assistance Program, and those that work with HIV/STI/viral hepatitis care and prevention. Materials included a one-page flier, a frequently asked questions document, and a website. Cases have been identified in part thanks to the vigilance of those who sought testing when monkeypox was spreading in the U.S. NCDHHS is conducting focus groups with these organizations and collaborating to share messages about prevention and control.

GENERAL PUBLIC

NCDHHS created a [web page](#) outlining the details of monkeypox, including a fact sheet and a frequently asked questions document. The page is a landing spot for social media posts and press releases that increase knowledge of the virus. A communications toolkit is available on the website. A case count will be posted on the site, and a count of vaccines will follow. NCDHHS will continue to update web resources and issue press releases as the situation changes.

Steps You Can Take

People can take basic steps to prevent the spread of monkeypox. If you have an unexplained rash, sores or other symptoms or have had a known or suspected exposure to monkeypox, see your health care provider. If you don't have a provider or health insurance, contact your [local health department](#) or a community health clinic near you.

Keep the rash covered and avoid sex or being intimate with anyone until you have been seen by a health care provider. Monkeypox is usually a self-limited disease with the symptoms lasting from two to four weeks, though severe cases can occur. Standard household cleaners and detergents are effective for cleaning environmental surfaces and linens.

More Information

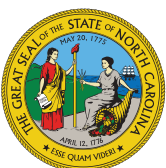
More information can be found on the [Division of Public Health Monkeypox Website](#) and the [CDC website](#):

- [Signs and Symptoms](#)
- [How it Spreads](#)
- [Monkeypox Facts for People Who are Sexually Active](#)

NCDHHS is committed to transparency, proactive communication, and a person-focused response to Monkeypox. We want to ensure residents, local health departments and providers in North Carolina have the information and tools they need to protect themselves and others. From our state laboratory, to our close partnerships with local health departments, providers, and community based organizations, to our world-class team of experts, NCDHHS has responded quickly to this monkeypox outbreak as it does all public health emergencies. NCDHHS is also committed to ensuring that equity is centered in our response activities and that we are addressing stigma that can prevent people from seeking care and taking other important steps to protect their health. NCDHHS will continue to advocate for the resources needed to ensure the health, safety and well-being of all people in North Carolina.



Up to date information on monkeypox can be found using this QR code. Please share it with your friends and family.



NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**
Division of Public Health

Communicable Disease Branch

<https://epi.ncpublichealth.info/cd/diseases/monkeypox.html>

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