

HEALTH ADVISORY



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Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
1 Lower Navy Hill Road, Navy Hill, Saipan, MP 96950



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHCC actively monitoring U.S. monkeypox outbreak

The World Health Organization (WHO) declared the multi-country monkeypox outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC). As of July 28, 2022, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported over 4,000 cases of Monkeypox in the United States and the U.S. territory of Puerto Rico.

While there are no cases of monkeypox that have been reported in the CNMI, the Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation (CHCC) is actively monitoring the situation and urges individuals in the community to recognize the signs of the virus.

What is monkeypox?

Monkeypox is a rare disease caused by infection with the monkeypox virus. The monkeypox virus is a part of the same family of viruses as smallpox, has similar symptoms to smallpox but milder, and is rarely fatal. Monkeypox is not related to chickenpox.

Symptoms

Symptoms of monkeypox include:

- A rash that can look like pimples or blisters that appears on the face, inside the mouth, and on other parts of the body, like the hands, feet, chest, genitals, or anus.



Pictures from <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/clinicians/clinical-recognition.html>

- Other symptoms can include:
 - Fever, chills
 - Headache, muscle ache, and backache
 - Swollen lymph nodes

The illness typically lasts 2-4 weeks. Sometimes, people get a rash first, followed by other symptoms. Others only experience a rash.

Transmission

Monkeypox spreads in different ways. The virus can spread from person to person through:

- Direct contact with the infectious rash, scabs, or body fluids
- Respiratory secretions during prolonged, face-to-face contact, or during intimate physical contact, such as kissing, cuddling, or sex
- Touching items (such as clothing or linens) that previously touched the infectious rash or body fluids

Pregnant people can spread the virus to their fetus through the placenta. People who do not have monkeypox symptoms cannot spread the virus to others.

Prevention

Take the following steps to prevent getting monkeypox:

- Avoid close, skin-to-skin contact with people who have a rash that looks like monkeypox.
 - Do not touch the rash or scabs of a person with monkeypox.
 - Do not kiss, hug, cuddle or have sex with someone with monkeypox.
 - Do not share eating utensils or cups with a person with monkeypox.
 - Do not handle or touch the bedding, towels, or clothing of a person with monkeypox.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

What if you think you have monkeypox?

If you are sick with possible monkeypox:

- Isolate at home.
- If you have an active rash or other symptoms, stay in a separate room or area away from people or pets you live with, when possible.
- Confirm your diagnosis:
 - Please call the CHCC at (670) 234-8950 in advance before visiting.
 - Ask to be transferred to your primary care provider and inform them that you have a concerning rash and would like to be seen.
 - For children, ask for children's clinic
 - For pregnant women, ask for women's clinic
 - For adults, ask for family care clinic
 - For emergencies, ask for emergency department

Treatment

There are no treatments specifically for monkeypox virus infections. However, monkeypox and smallpox viruses are genetically similar, which means that antiviral drugs and vaccines developed to protect against smallpox may be used to prevent and treat monkeypox virus infections

Vaccinations

There are two vaccines licensed by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) that are available for preventing monkeypox. Both vaccines are available in the United States and supply will continue to increase in the coming weeks. Currently, the CNMI does not have the vaccine stock available on-island. More information will be provided as it becomes available.

For more information, follow @cnmichcc on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter; visit <https://www.chcc.health>; or call (670) 234-8950. This health advisory may be found online at <https://www.chcc.health/pressrelease.php>.