

Date: August 5, 2022 at 1:49:09 PM CDT

Subject: OPH COVID-19 and Monkeypox Update (Nursing Homes)

Good Afternoon,

Please see below for a few updates on COVID-19 and Monkeypox.

COVID-19

We remain in the 6th surge of the COVID-19 pandemic, led by the Omicron BA 5 variant. Please remain vigilant considering the elevated level of COVID-19 activity in our region and state. Although our case counts and percent positivity remain high, we are now reporting a downward trajectory in cases.

A few more details:

1. Percent positivity: as of July 27th, the percent positivity for our region was 28.10%
2. Case counts: As of July 28, the epidemic curve for Region 4 showed 10 days in a downward trajectory in average daily incidence of COVID cases.
3. Hospitalizations: Hospitalizations are decreasing over the last 14 days in Region 4.
4. LDH COVID -19 dashboard has been updated: <https://ldh.la.gov/Coronavirus/>
5. For information on vaccine availability, including in-home vaccinations: 1-855-453-0774.
6. COVID-19 at-home test kits are available at no cost, to order: <https://www.covid.gov/tests>

Monkeypox

1. LA is now reporting 58 cases of MPX, 5 of those cases are in Region 4.
2. Case counts are updated daily at noon on our LDH Dashboard: <https://ldh.la.gov/page/monkeypox>
3. Our LDH website includes lots of helpful information regarding monkeypox, including Frequently Asked Questions, Information on Testing and Vaccinations. <https://ldh.la.gov/page/monkeypox> (FAQs also below)

As always, please let us know if you have any questions. Thanks, Tina.

CDC is closely tracking cases of monkeypox recently detected in the United States. As part of this 2022 U.S. Monkeypox Outbreak, the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) identified its first case of monkeypox in a Louisiana resident on July 7, 2022. As of **August 3**, Louisiana has identified **58** cases of monkeypox in Louisiana residents since the start of the 2022 U.S. Monkeypox Outbreak.

There are likely more undiagnosed human cases of monkeypox in Louisiana than have been formally tested and identified to date. LDH will continue to keep its webpage (<https://ldh.la.gov/monkeypox>) updated with the latest case count, guidance and resources for the public and providers. There have been 0 confirmed deaths resulting from monkeypox in this recent U.S. outbreak, and most people recover in 2-4 weeks.

While not new, monkeypox is a potentially serious viral illness caused by a virus not commonly seen in the United States, that is spread through close physical contact. The disease can make you sick, including a possibly painful rash, which may look like bumps on your skin, blisters or ulcers. Some people have a flu-like illness before they develop a rash.

According to CDC, early data suggest that gay, bisexual, same-gender-loving, and other men who have sex with men make up a high number of cases. However, **anyone who has been in close, personal contact with someone who has monkeypox can be infected**, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

Early detection is key. If you have symptoms, contact your health provider right away to get tested.

Getting vaccinated against monkeypox after exposure can help prevent disease or make it less severe.

Based on limited data on those who have been diagnosed to date, there are two groups currently eligible for monkeypox vaccine: (1) individuals with known exposures as well as (2) individuals with likely and recent high-risk exposures, i.e., men who have sex with men who have had multiple or anonymous partners in the past 14 days. If you believe you are eligible you can find a vaccine location on our monkeypox webpage (<https://ldh.la.gov/monkeypox>) or call 211.

What you can do:

1. Help LDH share the facts about monkeypox, including what symptoms to look for and how individuals can protect themselves and others from contracting or spreading the virus.
2. Point your friends and families to reliable sources of information like their healthcare provider, LDH, CDC and 211.
3. If you do not have a healthcare provider, you can visit your nearest parish health unit (<https://ldh.la.gov/phu>) or a federally qualified health center.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is monkeypox?

Monkeypox is a potentially serious viral illness that typically involves flu-like symptoms, swelling of the lymph nodes and a possibly painful rash that includes bumps that are initially filled with fluid before scabbing over. Illness could be confused with a sexually transmitted infection like syphilis or herpes, or with chickenpox.

Most people with monkeypox recover in 2-4 weeks, but the disease can be serious, especially for immunocompromised people, children and pregnant people.

To date, there have been zero confirmed deaths resulting from monkeypox in this recent U.S. outbreak.

How is monkeypox spread?

Monkeypox spreads in different ways. Monkeypox virus is most often spread from one person to another, through direct contact with a rash or sores of someone who has the virus.

It can also spread through contact with clothing, bedding and other shared items used by a person with monkeypox; or via respiratory droplets that can be passed through prolonged face-to-face contact, or during intimate physical contact including kissing, cuddling or sex.

People who do not have monkeypox symptoms cannot spread the virus to others.

What are the symptoms of monkeypox?

You may experience all or only a few of the symptoms of monkeypox. Symptoms of monkeypox can include:

1. Fever
2. Headache
3. Muscle aches and backache
4. Swollen lymph nodes
5. Chills
6. Exhaustion
7. 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

Sometimes people get a rash first, followed by other symptoms. Others only experience a rash. Some cases in the current U.S. outbreak have experienced only isolated rashes in the genital region or other body parts (e.g., hands, chest, face, in the mouth). Lesions are often described as painful until the healing phase when they become itchy (crusts).

Symptoms usually start within two weeks of exposure to the virus but can start up to three weeks later. Within 1-3 days of symptoms beginning, people usually develop a rash or sores.

What do I do if I have symptoms?

Contact your healthcare provider immediately and avoid sex or other close, intimate contact until you have been checked out.

Testing for monkeypox is now widely available. If you have symptoms and would like to be tested for monkeypox, contact your healthcare provider. Anyone without a provider or insurance can also be tested at their local parish health unit or community clinic: ldh.la.gov/phu

Avoid gatherings, especially if they involve close, personal, skin-to-skin contact or prolonged face-to-face contact.

Talk to your partners about any recent illness and be aware of new or unexplained sores or rashes on your body or your partner's body, including rashes on the genitals and anus.

People with new rashes should also be aware that the rate of syphilis is rising in Louisiana and nationally.

If your test for monkeypox is positive, stay isolated until your rash has healed, all scabs have fallen off, and a fresh layer of intact skin has formed.

Is there a monkeypox vaccine?

Yes. JYNNEOS is the name of the FDA-approved monkeypox vaccine - it is two doses, administered 28 days apart. Full protection begins two weeks after the second shot. The monkeypox vaccine is FDA approved and available at no cost to the individual.

Given how little vaccine we have received, our top priority for vaccination remains people with known exposures to monkeypox patients. There are two groups currently eligible for monkeypox vaccine: (1) individuals with known exposures as well as (2) individuals with likely high-risk exposures in the last 14 days.

Here is a [list](#) of all locations in Louisiana that have received monkeypox vaccine. We recommend you call ahead.

Thank you,

Tina Stefanski, MD
LDH/OPH Region 4
Regional Administrator/Medical Director



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