



Status of Recently Spreading Human Monkey Pox Virus Infection

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DESCRIPTION

Monkey pox is a rare disease caused by infection with the monkey pox virus. Monkey pox virus belongs to the same virus family as smallpox virus, which is the virus that causes smallpox. Symptoms of monkey pox are similar to those of smallpox, but they are mild and monkey pox is rarely fatal.

Monkey pox was discovered in 1958 when two outbreaks of diseases such as smallpox occurred in research monkey colonies. Despite being called "monkey pox," the cause of the disease remains unknown. However, rodents in Africa and non-human primates (such as monkeys) can hide the virus and infect humans.

The first human case of monkey pox was recorded in 1970. Prior to the 2022 outbreak, monkey pox was reported in humans in several Central and West African countries. Previously, almost all cases of human monkey pox outside of Africa were associated *via* travel abroad or imported animals to countries where the disease was common. These cases occurred on several continents.

Symptoms of monkey pox can include:

- Fever
- Headache
- Muscle aches and backache
- Swollen lymph nodes
- Chills
- Exhaustion

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.

The rash goes through various stages before it completely heals. The illness usually lasts 2-4 weeks. Sometimes people get a rash first, followed by other symptoms. Others only experience a rash.

For decades, monkey pox has been found primarily in Africa. However, it is occasionally found in other countries, including the United States. In the spring of 2003, the first outbreak of monkey pox outside Africa occurred in the United States. Cargo of infected animals from Ghana was imported into Texas. Infected rodents spread the virus to prairie dogs, which infected 47 people in the Midwest.

As overseas travel becomes more common, viruses that were previously fairly localized are more likely to spread around the world. In the summer of 2021, a case of monkey pox was diagnosed in a US citizen who travelled from Nigeria to the United States. Then, in 2022, outbreaks occurred in regions other than Africa, such as Europe, the United States, and Australia.

Anyone can get monkey pox. In Africa, it most often occurs in children under the age of 15. Outside of Africa, the disease seems to be more common in men who have sex with men, but there are many cases of people who do not fall into this category.

Monkey pox is caused in both humans and animals by infection with the monkey pox virus (a double-stranded DNA virus of the genus *Ortopoxvirus*, *Poxvirus* family). The virus is found primarily in the rainforest regions of Central and West Africa. The virus is divided into the Congo Basin and the West African ramifications that correspond to the geographical area.

Most human cases of monkey pox are obtained from infected animals, but the route of transmission remains unknown. The virus is thought to enter the body through broken skin, airways, or the inside of the eyes, nose, and mouth. When a person is infected, it is common to infect others, and family members and hospital staff are at particular risk of infection.

In the clinical differential diagnosis, other rash diseases such as chickenpox, scabies, bacterial skin infections, scabies, and syphilis and drug allergies should be considered. Lymphadenopathy in the precursory stages of the disease can distinguish monkey pox from chickenpox or smallpox.

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