

General Practice Clinical alert UPDATE: MONKEYPOX

- One new case of monkeypox has been reported in NSW. The case likely acquired their infection in QLD.
- Since 14 May 2022, there has been an increase in monkeypox cases reported from several countries that are not endemic for monkeypox virus.
- Most cases have been in men who have sex with men (MSM) with no recent travel to Africa
- Medical practitioners, pathology laboratories and hospital chief executives must notify cases to the Public Health Unit.
- Clinicians who suspect monkeypox should call the on-call Infectious Diseases Specialist at Westmead Hospital on 8890 5555 to discuss the management of the case.

What is the issue?

- Monkeypox is a zoonotic viral infection usually associated with exposure to an infected animal in West and Central Africa.
- Since May 2022, over 500 confirmed cases of monkeypox have been reported across multiple non-endemic countries. The majority of cases are in the UK and other European countries, and cases have also been reported in North and South America and the Middle East. These cases have been predominantly men who have sex with men (MSM) with no recent travel, indicating likely local transmission.
- There have now been three cases notified in Australia: two in NSW and the other in Victoria. Two cases had recently returned from Europe, while one NSW case likely acquired their infection in QLD. The three cases are not connected to one another.

How does monkeypox present?

- Monkeypox usually presents with a prodromal illness of fever, malaise, headache, myalgia and lymphadenopathy. Following the prodrome, a rash appears, and lesions may occur in the genital area, buttocks, mouth, face, arms and legs. Lesions start as a macular rash that develops into papules, vesicles, then pustules, which crust and fall off.

How is monkeypox likely to be transmitted in this international outbreak?

- Person-to-person transmission of monkeypox can occur by direct contact with the rash, and sometimes in the prodromal phase by respiratory droplets to close contacts. Monkeypox may be passed on by direct contact during sex or contact with clothing or linen used by a case.

How to notify and manage a suspect monkeypox case

- Monkeypox is notifiable to NSW Health by medical practitioners, pathology laboratories and hospital chief executives.
- Please look out for monkeypox, particularly in returned travellers. A telemedicine consultation is advisable where possible.
- If monkeypox is suspected, contact the on-call Infectious Diseases Specialist at Westmead Hospital on 8890 5555 before taking any samples. If the patient is at home, they should remain isolated pending further advice from the ID physician. Cases who present to the surgery should be isolated and wear a surgical mask while awaiting further advice. The Westmead ID specialist will advise on the appropriate test, clinical management and personal protective equipment.
- Monkeypox is usually a self-limiting illness and most people recover within a few weeks.
- Notify cases to the public health unit to initiate a public health investigation, contact tracing and control measures.

Further information

- Please contact your local Public Health Unit on 1300 066 055 for more information.



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2 June 2022