

# General Practice Clinical alert UPDATE: MONKEYPOX



Health

- Since 14 May 2022, there has been a global increase in monkeypox cases reported from countries that are not endemic for monkeypox virus.
- Most cases were in men who have sex with men (MSM) with no recent travel to Africa
- There is one confirmed case of monkeypox in NSW.
- Monkeypox has been updated to a [scheduled medical condition \(Category 2, 3 and 4\) and notifiable disease](#) under the NSW *Public Health Act 2010* and is notifiable by medical practitioners, pathology laboratories and hospital chief executives.
- 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 and notify their Public Health Unit on 1300 066 055.

## What is the issue?

- Monkeypox is a zoonotic viral infection usually associated with exposure to an infected animal in West and Central Africa.
- As at 24 May 2022, over 150 confirmed cases of monkeypox have been reported across 16 non-endemic countries including the UK and other European countries, North America, Israel and Australia. Cases associated with this international outbreak are predominantly men who have sex with men (MSM) with no recent travel to an endemic country, indicating likely local transmission.
- There have been two confirmed cases notified in Australia, one in NSW and the other in Victoria. Both had recently returned from Europe.

## How does monkeypox present?

- Monkeypox usually presents with a prodromal illness of fever, malaise, headache, myalgia and lymphadenopathy. Following the prodrome, a rash appears with lesions in the mouth spreading to the face, arms and legs. Lesions start as a macular rash that develops into papules, vesicles, then pustules, which crust and fall off.
- A notable feature of this outbreak is presentation with a rash in the genital area.

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


- Person-to-person transmission of monkeypox can occur by respiratory droplets in the prodromal phase and through direct contact with the rash. 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.
- Clinicians are asked to look out for signs and symptoms consistent with monkeypox particularly in returned travelers or persons with a clinically compatible rash. 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 and clinical management.
- 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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25 May 2022

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