

General Practice Clinical alert: MONKEYPOX

- **Fifteen confirmed cases of monkeypox have been detected in Europe and the United States. A further 38 cases are suspected**
- **Most cases were men who have sex with men (MSM) with no recent travel to West Africa**
- **There have been no reports of monkeypox in NSW**
- **If they suspect monkeypox, clinicians are advised to immediately notify the on-call Westmead Hospital Infectious Diseases Specialist on 8890 5555 to discuss the case and management**

What is the issue?

- 15 confirmed cases of monkeypox have been reported in the UK (n=9), America (n=1) and Portugal (n=5). Twenty-three suspected cases have been reported in Spain. Recent cases have predominantly been detected in gay, bisexual, or men who have sex with men (MSM).
- Monkeypox is a rare zoonotic viral infection usually associated with travel to West and Central Africa. One case in the UK had recently returned from Nigeria. Other cases have not reported any recent travel, indicating likely community transmission.
- No case of monkeypox has been detected in NSW to date.

How does monkeypox present?

- First symptoms (prodrome) of monkeypox include fever, malaise, headache, and sometimes sore throat and cough, and lymphadenopathy.
- Following the prodrome, lesions first begin in the mouth and spread to the 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 transmitted?

- Infection of humans results from direct contact with the blood, bodily fluids, or cutaneous or mucosal lesions of infected animals. In Africa, evidence of monkeypox virus infection has been found in many animals.
- Person-to-person transmission is unusual, and is mainly through direct contact of lesion material, or via respiratory droplets. Monkeypox has not previously been described as a sexually transmitted infection though it can be passed on by direct contact during sex and contact with clothing or linens used by a person who has monkeypox.

How to manage a suspect monkeypox case

- Clinicians are asked to look out for signs and symptoms consistent with monkeypox particularly in returned travelers or persons with clinically compatible rash. A telemedicine consultation is advisable where possible
- If monkeypox is suspected, immediately notify the on-call Westmead Hospital Infectious Diseases Specialist on 8890 5555 to discuss the case and management. Isolate the patient and ask the patient to wear a surgical mask while awaiting further advice. Westmead infectious disease specialist will advise on the appropriate test.
- There are no specific treatments available for monkeypox infection. It is usually a mild self-limiting illness and most people recover within a few weeks.

Further information

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

Dr Jeremy McAnulty

Executive Director Health Protection NSW
19 May 2022

