

TO: Vermont Health Care Providers and Health Care Facilities
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Monkeypox Virus – Recommendations for Vermont Health Care Providers

Background:

[Monkeypox](#) is usually a self-limited disease with illness lasting 2 to 4 weeks. Severe cases can occur. The virus does not spread easily between people, however, there is evidence of recent community transmission in multiple countries that don't normally report cases of monkeypox, including in the United Kingdom, Portugal, Spain and Canada (Montreal). Transmission can occur through contact with body fluids, monkeypox sores, items that have been contaminated with fluids or sores (clothing, bedding, etc.), or through respiratory droplets following prolonged face-to-face contact.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently released a [Health Alert Network \(HAN\) Health Advisory](#) with monkeypox recommendations for clinicians.

Requested Actions:

- **Become familiar with the [clinical presentations of monkeypox](#)**, which can resemble more common diseases such as secondary syphilis, herpes, chancroid and varicella zoster.
- **Consider monkeypox in any person who presents with a consistent rash or skin lesions**, especially if the person:
 - Is a man who reports sexual contact with other men.
 - Traveled to a country where monkeypox cases have been reported during the month before their symptoms began.OR
 - Reports contact with people who have a similar rash or have received a diagnosis of suspected or confirmed monkeypox.
- **Immediately report suspect cases of monkeypox** to the Vermont Department of Health (VDH) by calling **802-863-7240, option 7** (24 hours, 7 days/week). VDH will:
 - Advise on [isolation and infection control](#) protocols.
 - Provide testing guidance for patients meeting criteria – **consultation with VDH should be performed prior to submitting specimens.**
 - After diagnosis of monkeypox, perform contact tracing, consult with CDC on medical countermeasures (e.g., pre- and postexposure vaccination, antiviral treatment) and provide [postexposure guidance](#).

- **After consultation with VDH, collect multiple specimens for preliminary and confirmatory testing.** The Vermont Department of Health Laboratory (VDHL) can perform preliminary monkeypox virus PCR testing on pre-approved specimens. Confirmatory testing will be performed at the CDC. Collect dry lesion swab specimens as follows:
 - Vigorously swab or brush multiple lesions with two separate sterile dry polyester or Dacron swabs per lesion.
 - Insert each swab into a sterile screw-capped tube, such as a 15mL conical tube. Do NOT add or store in viral or universal transport media.
 - Refrigerate (2–8°C) specimens within an hour after collection and maintain at this temperature during shipping.
 - Submit specimens to the VDHL with a completed [Clinical Laboratory Test Request form](#).

If you have any questions, please contact the HAN Coordinator at 802-859-5900 or vthan@vermont.gov.

HAN Message Type Definitions

Health Alert: Conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: Provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update: Provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

Info Service Message: Provides general correspondence from VDH, which is not necessarily considered to be of an emergent nature.