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Gallatin City-County Health Department Announces First Probable Case of Monkeypox in Gallatin County

The Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) and Gallatin City-County Health Department (GCCHD) confirmed a single probable case of monkeypox virus in a Gallatin County adult.

Initial testing was completed August 9, 2022, at the Montana State Public Health Laboratory and confirmatory testing will occur next with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Gallatin City-County Health Department is performing contact tracing and will communicate with individuals identified as a close contact. The patient did not require hospitalization and is isolating at home. To protect patient confidentiality, no further details related to the patient will be disclosed.

Gallatin City-County Health Officer Lori Christenson said, “We appreciate the continued partnership with DPHHS and our local providers in our collective effort to slow the spread of monkeypox. With this first probable case in Gallatin County, we want to encourage healthcare providers to be on the lookout for monkeypox infections to help minimize transmission. Anyone with symptoms should isolate and consult a healthcare provider.”

As of August 8, 2022, CDC reports 8,934 cases of monkeypox/orthopoxvirus in 49 U.S. states. In recent months, more than 29,844 cases have been reported in 81 countries where the disease is not typically reported.

Symptoms of monkeypox can include fever, headache, muscle aches and backache, swollen lymph nodes, chills, exhaustion, and a rash that can look like pimples or blisters that appear on the face, inside the mouth, and on other parts of the body.

The illness typically lasts 2-4 weeks and most people get better on their own without treatment. At times, monkeypox can cause scars from the sores, the development of secondary infections, such as pneumonia, or other complications.

The virus does not easily spread between people with casual contact, but transmission can occur through contact with infectious sores and body fluids; contaminated items, such as clothing or bedding; or through respiratory droplets associated with prolonged face-to-face contact. Because monkeypox transmission requires close and prolonged contact, close-knit social networks have been particularly impacted. Individuals who believe they may have been exposed to monkeypox or have the [characteristic rash or other symptoms](#), should contact their health care provider.

There is no treatment specifically for monkeypox. However, because monkeypox and smallpox viruses are closely related, antiviral drugs (such as tecovirimat) and vaccines developed to protect against smallpox may be used to prevent and treat monkeypox virus infections. The need for treatment will depend on how

sick someone gets or whether they are likely to get severely ill. DPHHS has pre-positioned a supply of tecovirimat in the state for use, if necessary.

CDC does not recommend widespread vaccination against monkeypox at this time. However, vaccination may be recommended for some people who have been exposed to the monkeypox virus. Jynneos vaccine doses are already in the state and have been placed at several strategic locations, including the Gallatin City-County Health Department to ensure identified close contacts needing a vaccine can access it quickly.

The Health Department and DPHHS will follow CDC vaccination recommendations for monkeypox vaccination and expanded criteria which may be recommended for the following individuals.

- Post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP): Adults 18 years and older who have had exposure to individuals with confirmed orthopoxvirus/monkeypox virus infection.
- Expanded post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP++): Adults 18 years and older with certain risk factors that might make them more likely to have been recently exposed to monkeypox may be considered for PEP++. This may include people that are identified through case investigations/contact tracing, people who are aware that one of their sexual partners from the past 2 weeks has received a monkeypox diagnosis, and individuals that report group sex/sex with multiple partners in the past two weeks in association with certain events, venues, or geographical areas in which monkeypox transmission has been reported.
- Pre-Exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) Adults 18 years and older who meet one of the following criteria:
 - Men who have sex with men and have recently had multiple or anonymous sexual partners; **OR**
 - Partners of men who have sex with men who have had multiple or anonymous sexual partners; **OR**
 - Sex workers (of any sex); **OR**
 - Staff (of any sex) at establishments where sexual activity occurs (e.g., bathhouses, saunas, sex clubs).

Certain healthcare and public health response team members designated by public health authorities to be vaccinated for preparedness purposes according to ACIP guidance. At this time, most clinicians in the U.S. and laboratorians not performing the orthopox generic test to diagnose orthopoxviruses, including *Monkeypox virus*, are not advised to receive monkeypox vaccine PrEP.

For more information on the symptoms of Monkeypox, prevention and vaccine information, the spread of the disease, and more, please visit [healthygallatin.org website](https://healthygallatin.org). This is the best location for the most up-to-date information in Gallatin County.

For more information on statewide monkeypox response, [visit the MT DPHHS website](https://www.dphhs.mt.gov). This website has details on treatment and vaccination for monkeypox.

