



State of Maryland

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To: Highest Jurisdictional Officials
EMS Clinicians

From: Timothy Chizmar, MD
State EMS Medical Director

Date: May 26, 2022

Re: Monkeypox: What You Need to Know

Monkeypox is a rare, but potentially serious, viral illness that typically starts with flu-like symptoms and progresses to a rash, characterized by fluid-filled lesions that resemble chickenpox or herpes, within 3 days. The rash typically starts on the face and spreads to other parts of the body.

Monkeypox is commonly encountered in some countries within central and western Africa. However, on May 24th, one confirmed case was found in Massachusetts, followed by seven presumptive-positive cases in other states. Various clusters have also been found across Europe. Viral spread typically requires close contact with an infected animal (e.g., primates, small mammals) or person, contaminated materials, or by respiratory droplets that can travel as far as 6 feet.

Currently, the CDC acknowledges that EMS personnel in the US are unlikely to encounter a case, but is advising precautionary measures to reduce the risk of transmission. In the context of COVID, EMS and patients, at a minimum, should be wearing surgical masks on all encounters. Patients with fever and rash always warrant close attention to PPE to prevent the spread of disease by contact or respiratory routes. If you have a patient with suspected monkeypox, you should:

- **Identify:** Consider monkeypox in a patient with flu-like illness (fever, headache, muscle aches, swollen lymph nodes) followed by a rash starting on the face and spreading to other areas of the body.
- **Isolate:** EMS clinicians should use gloves, gown, eye protection and a NIOSH-approved N-95 or equivalent respirator if monkeypox is suspected.
 - Apply a surgical mask to the patient, if tolerated, and cover the patient with a sheet if a rash is present.
 - The driver's compartment should be isolated and the exhaust fan in the patient compartment should be turned on to the highest setting.
 - Limit the number of personnel making patient contact.
 - Exercise caution when performing intubation, suctioning, CPAP, or other aerosol-producing procedures.
 - Standard cleaning and disinfection procedures should be performed using an EPA-registered hospital-grade disinfectant with an emerging viral pathogen claim. Products with Emerging Viral Pathogens claims may be found on [EPA's List N](#). Follow the manufacturer's directions for concentration, contact time, and care and handling. Monkeypox-contaminated materials require special management; work with the receiving hospital to dispose of linens and other waste appropriately.
- **Inform:** If you suspect a case of monkeypox, inform the receiving facility as soon as possible, so that the patient may be properly isolated upon arrival. As soon as practical after the call, notify your supervisor and infection control officer, as additional reports to the health department may be indicated. For more information, follow this [link](#).