



August 26th, 2022

Today, August 26th, Beaufort County Health Department identified Beaufort County's first case of monkeypox. The Health Department is working with the patient and provider to identify and notify individuals who may be at risk due to close contact. The patient is currently isolated, and no further information will be shared to protect the patient's privacy. In North Carolina, there are currently 288 cases.

Monkeypox is a rare, but potentially serious, viral illness that typically involves flu-like symptoms, swelling of the lymph nodes, and a rash that includes bumps that are initially filled with fluid before scabbing over. It could be confused with a sexually transmitted infection like syphilis or herpes, or the varicella-zoster virus (chickenpox). Symptoms usually develop 7 to 14 days (and up to 21 days) after being exposed. People with monkeypox are infectious from the start of symptoms (before the rash forms) until the lesions heal with newly formed skin underneath scabs, and the scabs have all fallen off.

Unlike COVID, there is treatment and vaccines available to protect against monkeypox or to reduce disease severity. Beaufort County Health Department does offer the monkeypox vaccine. Must meet eligibility criteria to receive the vaccine. Vaccine eligibility criteria includes:

- Anyone who has been in close physical contact with someone diagnosed with monkeypox in the last 14 days
- Men who have sex with men, or transgender individuals, who report any of the following in the last 90 days:
 - Having multiple or anonymous sex partners
 - Being diagnosed with a sexually transmitted infection
 - Receiving medications to prevent HIV infection (PrEP)
- Available for certain health care workers and public health response team members designated by public health authorities

Monkeypox can spread to anyone through close, personal, often skin-to-skin contact. This includes:

- Direct contact with monkeypox rash, scabs, or bodily fluids from someone infected with the virus.
- Sharing objects and unwashed fabrics (bedding, towels, or clothing) that someone with monkeypox has used.
- Contact with respiratory secretions from someone who is infected (the type that mainly occur when living with or caring for someone who has monkeypox).

“As cases increase, we understand how deeply concerning monkeypox has become, but at this time, the threat of transmission for monkeypox remains low,” said James Madson, Beaufort County Health Director.

For more information pertaining to monkeypox, please visit our website at www.bchd.net.

Thank you,
James Madson, RN, MPH
Health Director