
CLEVELAND COUNTY

PUBLIC HEALTH CENTER

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NC Officials Identify Confirmed Case of Monkeypox in Cleveland County

SHELBY, NC – The Cleveland County Health Department is reporting the first case of monkeypox virus infection in a Cleveland County resident, confirmed by testing at the State Laboratory of Public Health. 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. Illness could be confused with a sexually transmitted infection like syphilis or herpes, or with varicella zoster virus (chickenpox). Most infections last two to four weeks.

The Cleveland County Health Department is working closely with NCDHHS and the patient to identify and notify individuals who may have been in contact with the patient while infectious. Monkeypox is typically spread by skin-to-skin contact. The person is currently isolating at home. No further information will be shared about this case to protect the patient's privacy.

Since May 2022, 3,308 monkeypox cases have been identified outside of endemic regions worldwide, with 6,617 cases identified in the United States and 72 cases in North Carolina. There have been no deaths related to this outbreak.

"The number of monkeypox cases has been growing in the U.S. and globally," Cleveland County Deputy Health Director DeShay Oliver said. "Though this is the first confirmed case in Cleveland County, we anticipate and are prepared for additional positive cases. We are encouraging people who have a rash or skin lesion that [looks like monkeypox](#) to get tested."

Monkeypox is transmitted person to person through direct skin-to-skin contact, having contact with an infectious rash, through body fluids or through respiratory secretions. Such contact often occurs during prolonged face-to-face contact or during intimate physical contact, such as kissing, cuddling or sex. While anyone can get monkeypox, most cases identified have been in men who have sex with men.

Vaccination after recent exposure may reduce the chance of getting monkeypox and can reduce symptom severity if you do get monkeypox. The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services has expanded the list of higher-risk people who are eligible to receive the monkeypox vaccine to help prevent spread in the state. Vaccinations to protect against monkeypox are now available for:

- Anyone who had close contact in the past two weeks with someone who has been diagnosed with monkeypox, and
- Gay or bisexual men or transgender individuals who report any of the following in the last 90 days:
 - Having multiple sex partners or anonymous sex
 - Being diagnosed with a sexually transmitted infection
 - Receiving medications to prevent HIV infection (PrEP)
- Certain Health Care Workers and public health response team members designated by public health authorities

Those who meet the above criteria and are interested in receiving the vaccine should contact their [local health department](#) to find out whether they are eligible and to schedule an appointment.

Everyone can take basic steps to prevent the spread of monkeypox. If you have an unexplained rash, sores, or other symptoms, see your health care provider. Keep the rash covered and avoid sex or being intimate with anyone until you have been evaluated. If you don't have a provider or health insurance, call your local health department.

More information can be found on the CDC website:

[Signs and Symptoms](#)

[How it Spreads](#)

[Monkeypox Facts for People Who are Sexually Active](#)

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