



County of Santa Cruz

HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

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Public Health Division

Press Release

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FIRST PROBABLE CASE OF MONKEYPOX DIAGNOSED IN SANTA CRUZ COUNTY RESIDENT

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY – The Santa Cruz County Public Health Division announced today that following a recent uptick in cases globally and in the United States, the first probable case of monkeypox has been identified in a Santa Cruz County resident through testing at a California Reference Laboratory Network (RLN) facility. The individual is under the care of a medical provider, in isolation, and in good condition. Santa Cruz County Public Health is awaiting results of confirmatory test results from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

According to CDC, the risk to the general population from monkeypox is low, and the virus does not spread easily between people without close contact. There is still more to learn about the conditions in which monkeypox is spreading in the United States, and people can expect that public health guidance will evolve accordingly.

“We want to emphasize that this is not a disease that spreads easily through the air like COVID-19. However, we do want people who might have been exposed to watch for symptoms and to seek medical care if they develop symptoms,” said Santa Cruz County Health Officer Dr. Gail Newel. “While most cases resolve on their own, monkeypox can be serious in rare cases, and we want to prevent further spread in the community.”

Monkeypox can spread through activities that include intimate sexual contact, kissing, breathing at very close range, or sharing bedding and clothing. It appears as a distinctive rash or sores on the skin anywhere on the body, including in the genital area. It often begins as flu-like symptoms.

Individuals who may have been exposed to monkeypox, or who have symptoms, should immediately contact a health care provider for evaluation and guidance. Clinicians should report suspected monkeypox cases to the County’s Communicable Disease Unit by calling 831-454-4114.

Santa Cruz County Public Health is monitoring updates and guidance from the CDC and the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) on the evolving situation. Systems are in place to receive reports of suspected cases from health care providers, to identify and reach out to individuals who have been in contact

with cases during the infectious period, and to ensure that clinicians remain well informed about testing, infection control and management of monkeypox as the situation develops.

Protect yourself from monkeypox.

- Consider wearing a well-fitted mask and covering exposed skin in dense, indoor crowds.
- Don't share bedding, clothing, and food or drink with others who exhibit symptoms of monkeypox.
- Talk with close physical contacts about their general health including recent rashes and sores.
- Stay aware if traveling to countries where there are outbreaks.

If you have symptoms, particularly a rash consistent with monkeypox, or if you have been in contact with someone who has been diagnosed with monkeypox, take the following steps.

- Cover the area of the rash with clean, dry, loose-fitting clothing.
- Wear a well-fitted mask.
- Avoid skin-to-skin, or close contact with others, including sexual contact, until a medical evaluation has been completed.
- Contact a health care provider as soon as possible for an evaluation.
- Assist public health officials to track others who may have been exposed.
- Inform sex partners and other close contacts of symptoms.

For additional information:

- CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/index.html>

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