



PRAIRIE VIEW
A&M UNIVERSITY
Health Services

MEMORANDUM

Date: August 11, 2022

To: PVAMU Community

From: Tondra Moore, Executive Director of Health Services

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tondra Moore', written over the printed name.

Re: Monkeypox

Greetings Panthers! I know that many of you may be concerned about the monkeypox virus as you return to campus. As with COVID, the university has remained vigilant and is prepared to respond if the virus should appear on campus. This announcement should serve as a resource for you on (1) the university infectious disease response process, (2) monkeypox facts and evidenced-based information, and (3) steps you can take, as a responsible Panther, to slow the spread of the virus in general.

PVAMU Infectious Disease Response Process

The university operates under an [Emergency Management Plan](#) that guides its response to any campus emergency including infectious diseases and pandemics. Early during the COVID pandemic, campus leaders and subject matter experts began to meet to execute the plans to ensure that students and employees were able to actively engage in the safest campus community possible. That group of campus representatives continues to meet and is prepared to quickly respond. Also, the campus community should be assured that any known risk to the campus will be communicated through official channels such as a campus email, university website, and/or university-run social media accounts.

Monkeypox Factsⁱ

Monkeypox is NOT a new virus. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), “it was first identified in humans in 1970.” The first outbreak in the United States was in 2003 which led to over 70 cases. The primary mode of transmission for humans is “from close contact with respiratory secretions, skin lesions of an infected person or recently contaminated objects.”

The incubation period, the time from being exposed to experiencing symptoms, can range from 5 to 21 days. The infection can be broken down into two phases with the lesions appearing during the second phase. This is important because you can have symptoms that you dismiss such as a fever, bad headache, swollen lymph nodes, back pain, muscle aches and extreme fatigue during the first phase. Many of these symptoms are common with other illnesses such as sinus infections, flu and covid. Therefore, self-monitoring and limiting contact will remain as one of the best mitigation strategies. The second phase typically involves a rash that develops into painful lesions. The virus usually lasts between 2 and 4 weeks. Currently, there have been over 10,000 recorded casesⁱⁱ in the United States of which 815 have been in Texas.

ⁱ <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/monkeypox>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/response/2022/us-map.html>

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Anyone is at risk for contracting monkeypox; however, during this outbreak many of the United States cases have been identified within a specific population. During this outbreak, the virus has been primarily spread by direct skin-to-skin contact, contact with wet bedding, or prolonged contact with a surface that had been infected by an individual with uncovered lesions.

Virus Mitigation Strategies

Since everyone is at risk, it is important to know what you can personally do to slow the spread of the virus. While a vaccineⁱⁱⁱ exists, currently there is a very limited supply of the vaccine available and recommended only for those who have been exposed or are in a higher risk category. Therefore, different strategies^{iv} must be taken to reduce your personal risk for infection.

Try to Prevent Infection

- Avoid close, skin-to-skin contact with people who have a rash.
- Avoid kissing, hugging or sexual activity with someone who has monkeypox.
- Avoid contact with objects such as eating utensils, cups, and grooming items such as combs and brushes.
- Avoid clothing and bedding used by an individual infected with monkeypox.
- Wash your hands often especially before eating, touching your face and after using the restroom.
- Clean and disinfect^v your home, clothing, and other personal spaces frequently.

After Possible Exposure

- If you develop any of the symptoms described earlier, avoid close contact with others.
- If you develop an unexplained rash, contact a medical professional immediately.
- If you suspect you have monkeypox or are diagnosed with monkeypox, “wear a well-fitting mask around others until the rash and all symptoms have healed.”^{vi}
- If you knowingly come in contact with monkeypox, seek a vaccination immediately as it is more effective prior to exposure but also helpful if received early after exposure.
- If you develop lesions^{vii}, wear clothing to prevent the lesions from touching commonly used surfaces. Do NOT pop or scratch the lesions. Do not shave the area until the scabs have fallen off. Doing so will increase the risk of spreading the virus but not the recovery process.
- Manage your symptoms and allow your body to heal.
- If you experience any life-threatening symptoms, contact an emergency medical professional immediately.

More Information

Seek information from credible sources. In the Houston area, the Harris County Public Health Department has established a hotline^{viii} to provide further guidance. The WHO remains the leading authority on monkeypox globally. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention^{ix} provides a variety of resources. On campus, refer to www.pvamu.edu/coronavirus or email covid-19@pvamu.edu.

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.fda.gov/vaccines-blood-biologics/vaccines/key-facts-about-monkeypox-vaccine>

^{iv} <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/prevention.html>

^v <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/specific-settings/home-disinfection.html>

^{vi} <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/if-sick/what-to-do.html>

^{vii} <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/if-sick/what-to-do.html>

^{viii} <https://publichealth.harriscountytexas.gov/monkeypox>

^{ix} <https://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/index.html>