



ALLEGHENY COUNTY

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ACHD Announces Expanded Access to Monkeypox Vaccine *Twenty Allegheny County Residents have Tested Positive for Monkeypox*

PITTSBURGH – The Allegheny Health Department (ACHD) today announced expanded access to the monkeypox vaccine through several community health providers. In addition to the department's Immunization Clinic, the primary care providers listed below are currently offering the monkeypox vaccine to those who have been identified as having a high-risk exposure to a person who has been diagnosed with monkeypox. Vaccine eligibility is determined on a case-by-case basis.

Community health care providers that are offering the vaccine, include:

- Central Outreach Wellness Center, 127 Anderson Street, Suite 101, Pittsburgh, PA 15212
- Allies for Health + Wellbeing, 5913 Penn Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15206
- Metro Community Health Center, 1789 S Braddock Ave #410, Pittsburgh, PA 15218
- AHN Positive Health Clinic, 1307 Federal Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15212 (**only vaccinating current patients**)

The department has confirmed its twentieth monkeypox case among county residents. The first case of monkeypox identified in Allegheny County occurred on June 30.

“The Health Department is offering the JYNNEOS vaccine to individuals at our Immunization Clinic who have had a high-risk exposure,” said ACHD medical epidemiologist Dr. Kristen Mertz. “The vaccine can prevent disease if given within four days of exposure to the virus. In some circumstances, the vaccine may be offered after four days in discussion with a vaccine provider.”

The ACHD is also developing a plan with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Pennsylvania Department of Health for expanding vaccine eligibility and clinic sites, as it obtains more vaccines from the federal government.

Monkeypox is a contagious disease caused by the same family of viruses (orthopoxvirus) that causes smallpox. Monkeypox symptoms are similar to smallpox, but milder and rarely fatal.

An individual can get the virus when they come into contact with the sores, scabs, or body fluids of an infected person. Infections occur through close, intimate situations, such as cuddling, kissing and sexual contact and by touching contaminated materials, such as clothing, bedding and other linens used by an infected person.

“A rash typically develops a few days after the early symptoms of monkeypox,” stated Mertz. “However, not all individuals infected with monkeypox develop symptoms prior to rash. It is critical that people who believe they were exposed to the virus and develop a rash get tested to limit the spread of the disease.”

Symptoms of the monkeypox virus can manifest in a variety of ways. Early symptoms of monkeypox include:

- Rash
- Fever

- Chills
- Headache
- Muscle aches
- Fatigue
- Swollen lymph nodes.

“The Health Department is closely monitoring the developing monkeypox situation to ensure we are prepared to respond as it develops,” explained ACHD Clinical Services Deputy Director Dr. Barbara Nightingale. “We are evaluating those who believe they have been in close contact with the virus or may have monkeypox themselves to make sure that individuals have access to testing, vaccination, and medication options.”

If a resident, or someone they know, believes they came in close contact with the monkeypox virus and is eligible for the vaccine, they should contact their primary care provider or the ACHD by calling 412-687-ACHD (412-687-2243).

All residents diagnosed with monkeypox will be contacted by ACHD public health staff who will provide guidance and resources. The Health Department is also working on contact tracing with the affected individuals.

Getting tested if a resident develops lesions and believes they may have been exposed to monkeypox is one of the best ways to reduce the spread of the virus. Testing is available throughout the county. Residents are encouraged to contact their primary care provider if they are interested in getting tested.

For residents who do not have a primary care provider, they can get tested at the county’s Public Health Clinic located at 1908 Wylie Avenue, Pittsburgh. No appointment is necessary. Clinic hours are Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and Wednesday noon to 7:30 p.m. To learn more about the Public Health Clinic, [visit its webpage](#).

Some residents have inquired about monkeypox and asked if the virus will have the same effect on the community, and country, as the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The contagiousness of monkeypox is very different from COVID-19,” said ACHD Director Dr. Debra Bogen. “It is spread through much closer contact with someone who is infected with the virus and is not airborne.”

The most effective means of prevention against contracting monkeypox are:

- Avoid contact with people who may be infected
- Avoid contact with bedding and other materials contaminated with the virus
- Avoid skin-to-skin contact with someone with a rash
- Use personal protective equipment (PPE) when caring for infected persons
- Practice safe sex
- Wash your hands with soap and water

Since the first case of monkeypox appeared in the United States in May 2022, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has asked health care providers to be alert for patients who have rash illnesses consistent with monkeypox, regardless of whether the patient reports travel or other risk factors.

Based on July 26 CDC data, 3,591 people in the United States have tested positive for monkeypox, with 95 of those diagnoses coming from Pennsylvania.

The Health Department’s nurses are available to answer questions, as well as provide guidance and resources to anyone who believes they have come in contact with monkeypox. They can be contacted by calling 412-687-ACHD (412-687-2243).

To learn more about monkeypox and the disease’s impact on Allegheny County, visit the Health Department’s new monkeypox webpage at: alleghenycounty.us/monkeypox.

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