



Indian Health Service Fact Sheet

Indian Health Service Response to Monkeypox

[Monkeypox](#) is a rare disease caused by infection with the monkeypox virus. Monkeypox is in the same family of viruses as variola virus, the virus that causes smallpox. Monkeypox symptoms are similar to smallpox symptoms, but milder, and monkeypox is rarely fatal. Monkeypox is not related to chickenpox.

IHS approach to monkeypox

Monkeypox [cases have been confirmed](#) across the United States. The Indian Health Service's proactive approach focuses on public health education in tribal communities, testing, contact tracing, and access to medical countermeasures, including vaccines and medications. Currently, the IHS is managing suspected and confirmed cases in multiple regions. The risk of monkeypox infection in the general U.S. population – including American Indian and Alaska Native communities – remains LOW. At this time, data suggest that gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men make up the majority of cases in the current monkeypox outbreak. However, anyone, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, who has been in close, personal contact with someone who has monkeypox is at risk.

On August 4, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra [declared the ongoing spread of monkeypox virus in the United States a Public Health Emergency](#). IHS regularly communicates with health care providers, other federal government agencies, public health officials, and tribal communities to share information on what the virus is, how to treat it, and which communities are most at risk. The [Biden-Harris Administration](#) also shares information on how to access testing, treatments, and vaccines and how to prevent transmission with local, government, and community leaders in regions and communities where transmission rates have been the highest.

Vaccine and oral medication distribution

In August 2022, IHS received an initial allocation of the [Jynneos](#) vaccine to prevent monkeypox and the oral medication tecovirimat (or [TPOXX](#)) for outpatient treatment of monkeypox virus infections. The IHS [National Supply Service Center](#) is working diligently to distribute these countermeasures to federal, tribal and urban Indian organization recipients based on need and equity. IHS began distributing vaccines and oral medication in mid-August, and all [IHS Areas](#) have received the Jynneos vaccine.

In addition, in an effort to remain flexible in response to this evolving public health emergency, IHS is utilizing a centralized hub to distribute the vaccine as needed to meet tribal and regional needs. The monkeypox outbreak is a dynamic situation, and IHS continues to work with its federal partners to secure additional supplies of vaccine and medication.

Treatment update

The [IHS National Pharmacy and Therapeutic Committee](#) has distributed clinical guidance for health care staff, including several emerging treatment updates regarding monkeypox and associated vaccines and therapeutics. These updates can be accessed on the [NPTC website](#). They include an [Emerging Treatments Update](#) with information on the FDA Emergency Use Authorization for intradermal administration of Jynneos vaccine.