




Department of Health

Mike DeWine, Governor
Jon Husted, Lt. Governor

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DATE: June 1, 2022

TO: Microbiology Laboratory Directors and Infection Preventionists
Local Public Health Partners: Health Commissioners, Directors of Nursing, Epidemiologists

FROM: Kristen Dickerson, PhD, Chief, Bureau of Infectious Diseases and State Epidemiologist, Ohio Department of Health 

SUBJECT: Monkeypox Virus Update

Dear Colleagues,

This memo provides details on the resources available through the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) for the diagnosis of monkeypox.

For background on the current situation, please refer to the Health Advisory issued on May 20, 2022, by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): <https://emergency.cdc.gov/han/2022/han00466.asp>. We also encourage you to reference the May 24, 2022, Clinician Outreach and Communication Activity (COCA) recording, "What Clinicians Need to Know about Monkeypox in the U.S. and Other Countries:" https://emergency.cdc.gov/coca/calls/2022/callinfo_052422.asp.

Orthopoxvirus PCR testing is available at the ODH Lab. Positive specimens will be forwarded to the CDC for confirmation of monkeypox. Healthcare providers who suspect monkeypox due to clinical presentation and patient history should report to the appropriate [local health department](#) based on the patient's address. Local health departments should notify ODH via the Class A Disease line, 614-722-7221, to report the suspect case and coordinate testing. The Class A Disease line is answered 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. When reporting a suspect case of monkeypox, please have the patient's clinical, travel, and social histories. Pictures of the rash are helpful but not required.

A conference call will occur with a representative from the CDC Emergency Operations Center. Participants on the conference call should include representatives from the submitting facility, ODH Bureau of Infectious Diseases, ODH Laboratory (ODHL), and the local public health department. If it is determined that specimen testing is indicated, please follow these instructions for collecting, handling and shipping:

Specimen Collection: At a minimum, collect 2 dry swabs. Collect each swab from different lesions as follows:

- Swab or brush lesion vigorously with two separate sterile dry swabs. Use a sterile nylon, polyester, or Dacron swab with a plastic, wood, or thin aluminum shaft. Do not use other types of swabs. Place swabs in individual sterile containers and seal with parafilm. A good example would be Copan 159C swab ([Regular Polyester Swab w/ Plastic Applicator](#)) swab transport system.
- DO NOT ADD ANY VIRAL OR UNIVERSAL TRANSPORT MEDIA.
- Refrigerate (2–8°C) or freeze (-20°C or lower) specimens within an hour after collection. Refrigerated specimens need to be delivered to ODHL within 6 days from collection and should be shipped with ice packs.

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Frozen specimens should be delivered to ODHL within 10 days from collection and should be shipped on dry ice.

- Shipping/transportation details will be provided during the CDC/ODH conference call.

Please refer to the [CDC Monkeypox website](#) for their recommendations on infection control and use of personal protective equipment.

General questions about monkeypox can be directed to ORBIT@odh.ohio.gov or 614-995-5599.

General questions about submitting specimens for *Orthopoxvirus* testing can be directed to the ODHL at 888-634-5227.

Please share this information with clinicians, and appropriate staff in your facility's lab.

Thank you for your assistance.