

Monkeypox Update – Including Interim Vaccine Guidance Q&A for Post-Exposure Prophylaxis

Situational Update as of June 9, 2022

In May 2022, over 400 confirmed monkeypox cases with no direct travel links to monkeypox endemic areas were reported from over 20 countries, including Europe, the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States. Epidemiological and clinical features of outbreaks in some European countries suggest human to human transmission via close contact, including close contact with sexual/intimate partners.

Reported cases have mainly but not exclusively self-identified in men who have sex with men (MSM) seeking care in primary care and sexual health clinics. Evidence suggests that those who are most at risk are those who have had close physical contact with someone with monkeypox while the individual is symptomatic.

In Canada, 81 cases have been confirmed including 71 in Quebec, 8 in Ontario (all in the City of Toronto), 1 in Alberta and 1 in British Columbia. There have been no confirmed cases of monkeypox in York Region at this time. As testing and awareness increases, more cases may be discovered across Ontario including in York Region.

Interim Vaccine Guidance Q&A now available

Ontario's Ministry of Health released a Q&A document on Monkeypox, primarily focusing on interim vaccine guidance. This document addresses use of the smallpox vaccine as post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) for monkeypox, including recommendations for use, access, storage guidelines and more. [Please see the document from the Ministry of Health for detailed information.](#)

As the monkeypox situation is rapidly evolving, the guidance provided by the Ministry are interim recommendations only.

The vaccine available for monkeypox PEP is Imvamune[®], a live attenuated smallpox vaccine. Only adults 18 years of age and older who meet the definition of a high-risk contact of a confirmed or probable case of monkeypox are recommended to be offered PEP (e.g., household contacts or sexual contacts of a probable/confirmed case). Intermediate risk contacts may also be offered PEP. Information on what defines a high-risk contact and case definitions may also be found in the Public Health Ontario technical brief [Monkeypox Virus: Interim Case and Contact Management Guidance for Local Public Health Units.](#)

At this time, no broad-based immunization with Imvamune is recommended beyond PEP in specific circumstances.

For the use of Imvamune vaccine as PEP, a single 0.5 ml dose of Imvamune should be administered within four days of exposure, up to a maximum of 14 days after exposure.

Details on use of Imvamune vaccine for special populations (e.g., immunocompromised, pregnant, breastfeeding individuals, children), vaccine co-administration, side effects, and storage can be found in the Q&A document.



The Federal government has procured limited supplies of this vaccine, which are then provided to provinces and territories who supply them to public health units based on the recommendations above.

Please remember that any suspect, probable or confirmed cases of Monkeypox are reportable to Public Health Ontario (647-260-7603) and the clinician needs to complete the [Ontario Monkeypox Investigation Tool](#). Please also contact York Region Public Health at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 73588 (M-F, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.), 905-953-6478 (outside of business hours) at the same time.

As part of our contact tracing and follow up, York Region Public Health will also provide recommendations in conjunction with the health care provider regarding PEP to individuals who may have had a high or intermediate risk exposure to a monkeypox case. We can also supply the Imvamune vaccine.

Testing and Specimen Collection for Monkeypox

[Monkeypox specimen collection and handling instructions are available from PHO](#). Please also contact York Region Public Health for assistance. To ensure safety of yourself and your patients, please consult the updated [Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Monkeypox in Health Care Settings from PHO](#).

For individuals who have not been in contact with cases of monkeypox, continue to consider alternate diagnoses in your differential based on common illnesses that may be circulating in the community. As a reminder, [suspect cases](#) are defined as those with symptoms compatible with monkeypox with no high-risk exposures AND in whom there is no alternative diagnosis to explain the illness. If there is a leading diagnosis (e.g., hand, foot and mouth disease, chickenpox, etc.), please communicate this in your interactions with both PHO and York Region Public Health.

Submission and Collection information

Refer to the [PHO testing guidance](#) for more information. Key points include:

- Please contact PHO customer Service (416-235-6556/1-877-604-4567) or after hours the on-call Duty Officer (416-605-3113) prior to specimen collection as well as contact York Region Public Health
- A variety of different sampling methods should be used (e.g., nasopharyngeal and throat swabs, swabs of the lesions, blood sample where appropriate)
- **NEW:** In addition to the Emergency Department, community-based clinicians that typically collect, handle and transport syphilis and gonorrhoea specimens can now also collect specimens for monkeypox in their clinics and transport them to the PHO laboratory. There is no requirement for a negative pressure room, but a clinician should place a client with suspect monkeypox in their own room with the door closed and use airborne precautions (including a fit-tested N95 mask) when assessing and testing their clients.

Resources

[Monkeypox Virus – Testing Indications and Specimen Collection and Handling](#)

[Infection Prevention and Control \(IPAC\) Recommendations for Monkeypox in Health Care Settings](#)

[Multi-Jurisdictional Monkeypox Outbreak 2022 – What We Know So Far](#)

[Q&A for Monkeypox Interim Vaccine Guidance for Post-Exposure Prophylaxis \(PEP\) and How to Access Tecovirimat](#)

Contact York Region Public Health

We will continue to share information on monkeypox as it becomes available. York Region Public Health is here to support your practice. For more information, call our dedicated health care professional line at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 77280 (8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday).