



Media Information:

For immediate release:

August 11, 2022

Monkeypox vaccine available in Yellowstone County

Billings, MT – RiverStone Health has a limited supply of monkeypox vaccine. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has authorized the use of this vaccine for people who have been exposed to monkeypox or who are at high risk for exposure. The vaccine can prevent the disease in people who have already been exposed if the first dose is given before symptoms develop.

To learn if you are eligible for monkeypox vaccine, please call RiverStone Health at 406.247.3396 or send an email to phs.info@riverstonehealth.org.

As of August 11, two cases of monkeypox in Montana have been identified by the state public health lab and are awaiting confirmation testing by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). No cases have been reported in Yellowstone County.

Monkeypox rarely is fatal, but the pimple-like rash it causes can be extremely painful and may last two to four weeks. The infected person needs to isolate until the scabs heal and new skin has grown over the lesions. The rash may result in permanent scarring.

In addition to the rash, some, but not all, people infected with monkeypox have other symptoms, such as fever, fatigue, muscle and backaches, swollen lymph nodes and chills. People with weakened immune systems, children under 8 years of age, people with a history of eczema, and people who are pregnant or breastfeeding may be more likely to get seriously ill or die.

The rash can look like pimples or blisters on the face, inside the mouth, on hands, feet, chest, genitals, anus or other body parts. Consult your healthcare provider about any rash of unknown cause.

The primary way that monkeypox has spread in the United States in this outbreak is by skin-to-skin contact with an infected person's rash or body fluids. It also can be spread by respiratory secretions during prolonged, face-to-face contact or intimate contact such as kissing, cuddling or sex. Symptoms usually appear one to two weeks after infection.

Touching items (such as clothing or linens) that previously touched the infectious rash or body fluids is another way monkeypox spreads.

The CDC recommends vaccination for people who have been in close contact with people who have monkeypox and for people who are at high risk of exposure to monkeypox. Anyone can get this disease, but in this U.S. outbreak, most of the first cases have involved men who had sex with men.

For more information, go to riverstonehealth.org/monkeypox.

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