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NEWS RELEASE

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Public Health Announces First Case of Monkeypox in Kern County

The first probable case of monkeypox has been identified in a Kern County resident. As of July 8, 2022, CDC has reported 791 cases identified in 37 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) reports 141 cases of monkeypox in California. While monkeypox can be extremely painful, no deaths have been reported in the U.S.

Monkeypox is a rare disease that is caused by infection with the *Monkeypox virus*. Monkeypox is of public health concern because the illness can be spread from infected humans, animals, and materials contaminated with the virus. Monkeypox spreads primarily through direct contact with infectious sores, scabs, or body fluids and through touching materials contaminated with the virus such as clothing or bedding that has been in contact with infectious sores. Monkeypox can also spread by respiratory secretions during prolonged, close, face-to-face or intimate contact.

Symptoms of monkeypox may include a rash that may look like pimples or blisters, fever, swollen lymph nodes, general body aches, or fatigue. People with a monkeypox infection may experience all or only a few of these symptoms. Most people with monkeypox will develop the characteristic rash. Monkeypox can be passed to others from the time symptoms start until all sores have healed and a fresh layer of skin has formed, which can take several weeks. There are no treatments that are specific for monkeypox; however, in limited situations, vaccination (developed to prevent smallpox, a similar virus,) may be recommended for those who may have been exposed to the virus.

“We encourage our community to stay alert about emerging public health threats like monkeypox; however, currently the risk to the general public is low,” says Brynn Carrigan, Director of Kern County Public Health. “The case is in isolation recovering at home. We are actively investigating the circumstances surrounding this case, identifying close contacts and notifying them of their potential exposure.”

There are several ways to reduce the spread of monkeypox, including:

- Avoiding close contact with people with symptoms like sores or rashes
- Practicing good hand hygiene
- Using appropriate personal protective equipment when caring for others with symptoms, including masks, gowns, and gloves
- Avoiding contact with infected materials contaminated with the virus
- Avoiding contact with infected animals
- Staying home if you are sick or have symptoms

Anyone who believes they have been exposed to monkeypox or has symptoms of monkeypox should contact a healthcare provider as soon as possible. For more information about Monkeypox, visit CDPH website:

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Monkeypox.aspx>

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