

News Release

For Immediate Release

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Contact: Melissa Propp, RN at 308-345-4223

Mpox Infections Rising in the US

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) is watching a large outbreak of Mpox (formerly known as monkeypox) in central Africa with cases appearing throughout the world and in the United States. Mpox is a virus that causes a distinctive blistering rash and is usually a mild illness but can cause death. The number of cases so far this year in the US is already twice the number of cases for this time last year. There have been no cases identified in Nebraska this year, however with our highly mobile society there is still a possibility of exposure.

Residents of southwest Nebraska are at low risk of Mpox at this time. This virus spreads through close contact with someone with an active infection of Mpox. It can also spread through touching objects or surfaces recently used by someone with Mpox or contact with respiratory secretions such as snot or mucus. A person with Mpox can spread it to others from the time symptoms start until the rash has fully healed and a fresh layer of skin has formed. Some people can spread Mpox to others from 1 to 4 days before they have symptoms.

Other symptoms of Mpox include muscle aches, headache, fever, swollen glands, exhaustion, or respiratory symptoms (sore throat, congestion, or cough). People at high risk of severe illness are those with weakened immune systems, such as those with HIV, history of eczema, children under the age of 1 year, and individuals who are pregnant.

There is a vaccine that protects against Mpox called JYNNEOS. There are limited doses available and due to the low risk from this virus in our area, the vaccine is currently only available in specific high-risk situations, such as people who have had close contact with someone who may have Mpox. SWNPHD encourages anyone in a high-risk group to talk to their healthcare provider about possible vaccination.

Cases of Mpox are being seen in unvaccinated and under-vaccinated people. Under-vaccinated means they have had one dose, but not the second dose. A person is considered fully protected two weeks after their second dose of JYNNEOS vaccine.

“For our nine-county area, Mpox is a low risk right now,” states Melissa Propp RN, Clinic Manager with Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department. “We encourage anyone who has had a possible exposure or who is experiencing symptoms to contact their healthcare provider.”

For questions about Mpox, call your health care provider or Melissa Propp, Clinic Manager at 308-345-4223. Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. The website swhealth.ne.gov contains many resources and additional information helpful to prevent disease, promote and protect health. You can follow us on Facebook, TikTok, YouTube and Instagram.

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