What should people do if they suspect their pet has monkeypox?

Precaution, all mammals should be considered susceptible at this time. The other types of animals that may become ill with monkeypox are currently unknown; as a result, all mammals should be considered susceptible until more is known about the extent of animal susceptibility.

What is monkeypox?

MonKEYpox is a rare, zoonotic (transmissible from animals to humans), viral disease that occurs mainly in the rain forest countries of central and west Africa. The disease was first discovered in laboratory monkeys in 1958. Blood tests of animals in Africa later found evidence of monkeypox infection in a number of African rodents. The virus that causes monkeypox was recovered from an African squirrel, which may be the natural host. Laboratory studies showed that the virus also could infect mice, rats, and rabbits. In 1970, monkeypox was reported in humans for the first time. In June 2003, monkeypox was reported in prairie dogs and humans in the United States.

What is the cause of monkeypox?

MonKEYpox is caused by monkeypox virus, which belongs to the orthopoxvirus group of viruses. Other orthopoxviruses that cause infections in humans include variola (smallpox), vaccinia (used for smallpox vaccine), and cowpox viruses.

What animal species are susceptible to monkeypox virus?

Animal species known to be susceptible to monkeypox virus include nonhuman primates, rabbits, and some rodents. The extent of animal susceptibility is not fully known, and it is best, for now, to consider all mammals to be susceptible.

What are the signs of monkeypox in animals?

In the current outbreak, illness in animals has been reported to include fever, cough, discharge from the nose and eyes, lymphadenopathy (swollen lymph nodes), pneumonia, and a loss of hair, with or without scabs. Some animals have died while others reportedly recovered. The other types of animals that may become ill with monkeypox are currently unknown; as a result, all mammals should be considered susceptible at this time.

What should people do if they suspect their pet has monkeypox?

1. Pet owners who suspect their animal may have monkeypox should immediately isolate the animal from humans and other animals and contact their state or local health department. In most cases, evaluation by a veterinarian will be recommended. Owners should notify the veterinarian before transporting the animal to the clinic so that appropriate infection control precautions can be implemented prior to arrival.

2. Owners should consider wearing a mask and gloves when handling the animal. Transport of the ill animal to a veterinary clinic should be done by a single individual to limit unnecessary exposure. Care should be taken to minimize driver exposure during transport. During transport, animals should be confined in a closed container such as a cardboard box. If available, the animal should be confined in a separate compartment of the vehicle, such as the bed of a pickup truck. Following transport, the area of the vehicle where the animal was confined should be cleaned and disinfected. Standard household cleaning/disinfectants may be used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

3. The animal's bedding should be collected and bagged and brought with the animal to the veterinary clinic for disposal as medically regulated waste. Soiled bedding should not be disposed of as household trash. Following identification of an animal with suspect monkeypox in a household, any animals (including dogs and cats) who may have come in contact with the sick animal should be closely observed for signs of illness for a period of one month following the last date of exposure. Contaminated household surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected. Standard household cleaning/disinfectants may be used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
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Can monkeypox in animals be treated?

Currently there is no proven treatment or vaccine for monkeypox in animals. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that all animals with signs of monkeypox infection, which can not be attributed to other diseases, should be humanely euthanized to prevent further spread of the disease to humans or other animals.

CDC is NOT currently recommending euthanasia of asymptomatic animals (animals not showing signs of disease) that may have been exposed to other infected animals. Exposed asymptomatic animals should be confined to the home and not allowed to come into contact with other animals. They should be observed for development of symptoms compatible with monkeypox for one month. Should such symptoms develop, the animal should then be evaluated and euthanized if indicated.

What are the clinical signs and symptoms of monkeypox in humans?

In humans, the signs and symptoms of monkeypox are similar to those of smallpox, but usually milder. Unlike smallpox, monkeypox causes swollen lymph nodes (lymphadenopathy). The incubation period (time from exposure to the virus to development of symptoms) for monkeypox is about 12 days, but can range from 4-20. The illness begins with fever, headache, muscle aches, backache, swollen lymph nodes, a general feeling of discomfort, and exhaustion. Within 1 to 3 days (sometimes longer) after onset of fever, the patient develops a papular rash (i.e., raised bumps), often first on the face but sometimes initially on other parts of the body. The lesions usually develop through several stages before crusting and falling off.

Is monkeypox fatal in humans?

Studies of human monkeypox in rural central and west Africa – where people live in remote areas and are medically underserved – have reported case-fatality ratios of 1% to 10%.

How long does the monkeypox infection last in humans?

The illness typically lasts for 2 to 4 weeks.

How do people get monkeypox?

Monkeypox can spread to humans from an infected animal through an animal bite or direct contact with the animal's lesions or body fluids. The disease also can be spread from person to person, although it is much less infectious than smallpox. The virus is thought to be transmitted by respiratory droplets during direct and prolonged face-to-face contact. In addition, it is possible monkeypox can be spread by direct contact with body fluids of an infected person or with virus-contaminated objects, such as bedding or clothing.

Is there a treatment or vaccine for monkeypox?

Currently, there is no proven, safe treatment for monkeypox. Smallpox vaccine has been reported to reduce the risk of monkeypox among previously vaccinated persons in Africa. CDC is recommending that persons investigating monkeypox outbreaks and involved in caring for infected individuals or animals should receive a smallpox vaccination to protect against monkeypox. Persons who have had close or intimate contact with individuals or animals confirmed to have monkeypox should also be vaccinated. These persons can be vaccinated up to 14 days after exposure. CDC is not recommending preexposure vaccination for unexposed veterinarians, veterinary staff, or animal control officers, unless such persons are involved in field investigations.

Has monkeypox previously been reported in the United States?

No. Prior to the recent report of the disease in the United States, community-acquired monkeypox had never been reported outside of Africa.

What should people do if they think they have been exposed to an animal or person with monkeypox?

Persons who think they may have been exposed to a person or an animal (e.g., pet prairie dog) with monkeypox should contact their health care provider and their state or local health department.

What measures have been taken to help contain the outbreak?

CDC and the public health departments in the affected states, together with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and other agencies, are participating in a variety of activities to prevent further spread of monkeypox and identify the source of the outbreak. To assist with the investigation and outbreak response, CDC has taken the following steps:

• Activated its Emergency Operations Center.
• Deployed teams of medical officers, epidemiologists, and other experts to several states to assist with the investigation.
• Issued an interim U.S. case definition for human monkeypox.
• Issued interim guidelines on infection control and exposure management for patients in the health care and community settings.
• Issued an immediate embargo and prohibition on the importation, interstate transportation, sale, and release into the environment of certain rodents and prairie dogs.

• Issued an interim guidance on the use of smallpox vaccine, cidofovir, and vaccinia immune globulin in the setting of an outbreak of monkeypox.

• Issued interim guidelines for veterinarians and pet owners who may be in contact with ill prairie dogs and exotic rodents from Africa.

The United States Department of Health and Human Services has issued an immediate ban on all rodent imports from Africa in response to the monkeypox virus outbreak in the U.S. In addition, the order also prohibits the distribution, sale, transportation and intentional release into the environment of prairie dogs and six specific African rodent species as follows: Tree squirrels (Sciurus); Rope squirrels (Funisciurus); Dormices (Graphiurus); Gambian Giant Pouched Rats (Cricetomys gambianus); Brush-tailed porcupines (Atherurus africanus); Striped mice (Typomys).

Should an individual exhibit symptoms, such as a rash accompanied by a fever, cough or aches, or become ill, they should immediately contact a physician. Should an animal become ill, individuals should immediately contact a veterinarian, contain the animal in an appropriate carrier and then transport it to the veterinarian without other people or pets in the vehicle. NOTE: Under no circumstances should such animals be intentionally released into the wild.

Local, state, and federal agencies, and private institutions that have participated in this investigation to date have included the Marshfield Clinic and Marshfield Laboratories, Froedtert Hospital and Medical College of Wisconsin, the City of Milwaukee Health Department, and at least 10 additional health departments in Wisconsin and Illinois, the Wisconsin Division of Public Health, Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection, and the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene, the Illinois Department of Public Health, the Illinois State Department of Agriculture, the Indiana State Department of Health, and the US Department of Agriculture.

For more information on monkeypox infection refer to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention web site at: www.cdc.gov/ncidod/monkeypox.