



COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO HEALTH AGENCY  
PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT  
**PROVIDER HEALTH ADVISORY**

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**Date:** August 15, 2022  
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### **First Case of Monkeypox Identified in SLO County Resident: Reminders on Clinical Presentation, Testing, Vaccine, and Reporting**

The first case of monkeypox has been identified in a San Luis Obispo County resident, following an uptick in cases globally and in California. The risk to the general public from this virus remains low, as the virus is usually spread through prolonged, close physical contact.

The individual, who is believed to have contracted the virus while traveling in another part of California, is recovering in isolation and is in good condition. The Public Health Department is in communication with the individual's close contacts and is providing vaccine to those who have been exposed to the virus. The vaccine is effective at preventing infection during the period after an individual is exposed to the virus but before symptoms develop (PEP).

In light of this news, providers should prepare for an increase in public interest in evaluation and testing for monkeypox. This advisory provides reminders on clinical presentation and testing protocol.

#### **Clinical presentation and evaluation**

The Public Health Department is communicating to the public that anyone who has an unusual rash, with or without flu-like symptoms, should contact their provider for an evaluation and testing if it is clinically indicated. It is up to each provider's clinical judgement to determine whether a patient's case is consistent with monkeypox and therefore appropriate for testing. Health officials are available for consultation as needed at the contact details above.

The Public Health Department receives many calls from individuals with self-reported symptoms and concerns about monkeypox. Based on self-reported information and without the opportunity for a visual exam, a Public Health Nurse may recommend an individual seek assessment from their healthcare provider. In this context, Public Health's recommendation for assessment does not mean that a clinic must perform testing. Testing is always at the discretion of providers.

#### **Testing**

Testing for monkeypox (specifically for non-variola orthopoxviruses, of which monkeypox is the only circulating virus) is available at the SLO County Public Health Laboratory (instructions attached) and from several commercial laboratories, including Aegis, ARUP Laboratories, Labcorp,

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#### **Public Health Department**

2191 Johnson Avenue | San Luis Obispo, CA 93401 | (P) 805-781-5500 | (F) 805-781-5543

[www.slopublichealth.org](http://www.slopublichealth.org)

Mayo Clinic Laboratories, Quest Diagnostics, and Sonic Healthcare (WestPac Labs).

For the SLO County Public Health Laboratory, turnaround time is currently within two business days. Previously, health screenings by a Public Health nurse were required to submit specimens for monkeypox testing through Public Health Laboratory. However, this is **no longer required** for SLO County providers. Providers may order monkeypox testing from the Public Health Laboratory by completing a [requisition form](#). Detailed specimen collection instructions are attached.

In addition to these instructions, please especially keep in mind:

- Do not clean lesions prior to collection.
- Avoid using numbing gels or other creams prior to collection.
- Unroofing the lesion is no longer appropriate or needed.
- Swab lesions vigorously during sampling.
- Send swabs in a sterile container (dry swab, no VTM).

### **Vaccine**

The Public Health Department has received a very small allocation (40 doses) of the JYNNEOS vaccine, which provides protection against monkeypox and smallpox. This small allocation of vaccine reflects a critically low national supply.

In accordance with state and national guidance, SLO County's initial small allocation of vaccine will be prioritized for people who have had close contact with someone who tested positive for monkeypox (PEP), and for laboratory workers who regularly handle the virus. We expect to receive another allocation later in the fall as vaccine supply gradually increases.

While there is not a waiting list for vaccine, residents may sign up to receive updates on monkeypox, including announcements when vaccine access expands, at [slocounty.ca.gov/monkeypox](http://slocounty.ca.gov/monkeypox). In addition, health care providers will continue to receive updates via advisories like this one.

### **To report suspected cases:**

**Call the San Luis Obispo County Public Health Department as soon as possible.** Call 805-781-5500 (M-F, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.) or 805-781-4553 (weekends and after hours).

### **For more information on monkeypox:**

- SLO County Public Health Monkeypox Information: [slocounty.ca.gov/monkeypox](http://slocounty.ca.gov/monkeypox)
- SLO County Public Health Laboratory testing information: [slocounty.ca.gov/lab-news](http://slocounty.ca.gov/lab-news)
- CDPH Monkeypox page: [www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/monkeypox.aspx](http://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/monkeypox.aspx)
- CDC Monkeypox Information for Healthcare Professionals: [www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/clinicians/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/poxvirus/monkeypox/clinicians/index.html)



# COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO PUBLIC HEALTH LABORATORY

Phone: (805) 781-5507 | Fax: (805) 781-1023 | Weekend Phone: (805) 305-8188  
[www.sloPublicHealth.org/Lab](http://www.sloPublicHealth.org/Lab)

## SPECIMEN COLLECTION & TRANSPORT INSTRUCTIONS

### Specimen Collection Procedure for Poxvirus PCR Testing

#### PROVIDER INFORMATION

If a specimen tests positive for non-variola orthopoxvirus DNA, a duplicate specimen will be referred to the CDC for confirmatory monkeypox testing. The CDC requires that a case ID be obtained prior to referral. To obtain a case ID, the following information is needed by the laboratory:

1. Patient initials, date of birth, and sex
2. Clinical and epidemiologic criteria for testing (e.g., presence of characteristic rash, contact to a known case, etc.)

#### SPECIMEN COLLECTION

1. Collect the skin lesions with a dry swab using a sterile nylon, polyester, or Dacron swab with a plastic or thin aluminum shaft. Do not use other types of swabs. Place in a sterile container and refrigerate within an hour of collection.
2. More than one lesion should be sampled, preferably 2 to 3 lesions from different body sites, for preliminary and confirmatory testing.
  - a. **Vigorously** swab or brush each lesion with two separate sterile dry swabs.
  - b. Break off swabs and place each into separate sterile tubes or containers.
  - c. Sample, label and store each lesion separately. **Do not place in VTM or UTM.** Swabs must remain dry.
  - d. Fill out the San Luis Obispo Public Health Laboratory Requisition completely.
  - e. Indicate on requisition that you are requesting **Poxvirus testing**.
  - f. Label the specimen with the patient's full name, date of collection, and specimen source.
  - g. Include patient's vaccination history [date of smallpox (vaccinia) vaccination], clinical findings and symptoms (date of rash onset), and travel or exposure history on the requisition.
3. **Note: If testing is needed for other viral causes of rash, separate collection is required.**

Preferred specimen types by virus are as follows:

- a. Varicella-Zoster Virus and Herpes Simplex Viruses: Swab specimens collected from cutaneous and mucocutaneous lesions in viral transport media (VTM) or universal transport medium (UTM).
- b. Enterovirus: Nasopharyngeal swab in VTM.

#### SPECIMEN STORAGE & TRANSPORT

- Dry swabs of lesions should be stored at refrigerated temperature (4°C) if shipping in 24-72 hours, otherwise store dry swabs at -80 °C.
- Clinical specimens should be shipped ASAP at refrigerated temperature in Category B packaging.
- Deliver to: San Luis Obispo Public Health Laboratory, 2191 Johnson Ave, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401.

#### REJECTION CRITERIA

- Incomplete specimen labeling/documentation
- Improperly stored specimens
- Swabs/scabs placed in viral or universal transport media
- Holding time greater than 72 hours at refrigerated temperature
- Specimen tubes/containers not sealed properly