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Department of Health

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STATE OF ALASKA

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Monkeypox vaccine eligibility expanded in Alaska

September 19, 2022, ANCHORAGE – While the risk of becoming infected with human monkeypox virus remains low for most Alaskans, the Alaska Department of Health (DOH) has now broadened eligibility to include anyone who believes they are at increased risk for infection.

“We are moving away from tiered eligibility to decrease barriers and increase access to vaccines for Alaskans at risk for monkeypox infection or exposure,” said DOH Staff Physician Dr. Lisa Rabinowitz. “The JYNNEOS vaccine that protects against human monkeypox virus is now available in Alaska for anyone who self-identifies as being at increased risk for infection.”

Here is the new eligibility language as it now appears on the department’s [monkeypox webpage](#).

Monkeypox vaccination is not recommended for the general public, but it is recommended for those at increased risk for infection. Transmission of monkeypox primarily occurs from close, personal skin-to-skin contact with someone who has a monkeypox rash.

- **Vaccination is available in Alaska for people who self-identify as being at increased risk for infection.**

The current epidemiology suggests that people with two or more sexual partners AND who are gay, bisexual, or other men who have sex with men (MSM) or transgender people are at increased risk. Data to identify groups at increased risk beyond MSM with multiple partners are limited. In addition to those considered at increased risk based on the current epidemiology, others potentially at risk might include sex workers, people with intimate or household contact with MSM with multiple partners, and people with increased risk of direct occupational exposure to monkeypox including certain health care workers.

The JYNNEOS vaccine that helps protect against human monkeypox infection was previously recommended for these groups of people:

- People who have been exposed to monkeypox (this can include an anonymous notification of exposure)

- People who have had multiple or anonymous sexual partners within the past six months AND identify as gay, bisexual, or other men or transgender people who have sex with men or other transgender people.

The JYNNEOS vaccine is a two-dose vaccine. People should get the second dose four weeks after the first dose. Protection begins building after the first dose, but people will not have the greatest protection until two weeks after the second dose.

As of September 19, over 450 first doses of JYNNEOS vaccine have been administered in Alaska, according to the Alaska Immunization Program within the Division of Public Health.

### **How can people find the human monkeypox vaccine in Alaska?**

People who self-identify as being at increased risk for monkeypox infection should contact their [local public health center](#) or call the Alaska COVID and Monkeypox Helpline (hours are 9 a.m. - 6:30 p.m. on weekdays) at 907-646-3322 if they wish to be vaccinated. In Anchorage, Fairweather, LLC is offering the vaccine seven days a week from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. at their Tikahtnu Commons clinic ([1130 N. Muldoon Road, Suite 110](#)). People can make an appointment with Fairweather on [PrepMod](#).

### **Alaska monkeypox cases**

DOH has reported five cases of monkeypox in Alaska residents to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Four of these cases occurred in Anchorage while one case is outside of Anchorage. Alaska's resident cases can be found on the CDC's [case count map](#) for the 2022 United States outbreak.

Monkeypox cases have been reported in every other state, plus Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia, according to the CDC.

**For more information on monkeypox, including how to prevent, recognize and treat monkeypox, please visit these websites:**

- DOH: [Monkeypox Website](#)
- CDC: [U.S. Monkeypox Outbreak 2022: Situation Summary](#),
- CDC: [Monkeypox Signs and Symptoms](#)
- CDC: [Monkeypox Prevention](#)

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