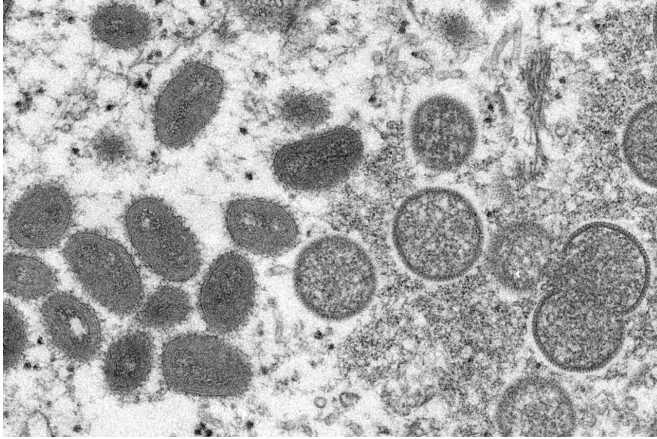


Monkeypox outbreak growing across Britain

24 June 2022



This 2003 electron microscope image made available by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows mature, oval-shaped monkeypox virions, left, and spherical immature virions, right, obtained from a sample of human skin associated with the 2003 prairie dog outbreak. British health officials said they cannot tell if the spread of monkeypox has peaked in the country as they announced another 45 cases Friday, June 10, 2022. That makes for a total of 366 cases in the biggest-ever outbreak of the disease beyond Africa. Credit: Cynthia S. Goldsmith, Russell Regner/CDC via AP, File

British officials said the monkeypox outbreak in the U.K. is growing across the country, mainly among men who are gay or bisexual, or other men who have sex with men. They urged those with new or multiple sex partners to be vigilant for the symptoms of monkeypox.

In a technical briefing released on Friday, Britain's Health Security Agency said their data show monkeypox is spreading in "defined sexual networks of gay, bisexual, or men who have sex with men." Officials said there were no signs suggesting sustained spread beyond those populations.

Of the 810 monkeypox cases in the U.K. to date, five are in women. Among patients who completed a detailed survey, 96% of those infected were men

who were gay, bisexual or had sex with other men. Among the nearly 50 countries reporting monkeypox cases globally, Britain has the biggest outbreak beyond Africa.

"If you are concerned that you may have monkeypox, don't go to events, meet with friends or have [sexual contact](#)," said Dr. Meera Chand, director of clinical and emerging infections at Britain's Health Security Agency. Doctors say people who have unexpected skin lesions or rashes that could be monkeypox should seek help at a sexual health clinic and avoid close contact with others until they have consulted a physician.

She said that anyone who was in close, [physical contact](#) with someone who had monkeypox was at risk of catching the disease, regardless of their [sexual orientation](#).

"To assist with our contact tracing, we encourage everyone to ensure they exchange contact details with [sexual partners](#), to help us limit further transmission where cases occur," Chand said.

The Health Security Agency said there were "a relatively high number of cases reported travelling to Gran Canaria in early May," suggesting they were infected there before returning to Britain.

Earlier this week, British officials said they were [widening their vaccination policy](#) to offer shots to gay and bisexual, and other men who have sex with men who were at high risk of catching monkeypox, which it defined as those who have multiple partners, participate in group sex or attend venues where sex occurs on the premises.

On Thursday, the World Health Organization convened an [expert committee](#) to decide whether the expanding outbreak of monkeypox should be declared an international health emergency.

Globally, about 50 countries have reported more than 3,300 cases. There have been no deaths reported beyond Africa, which has seen roughly

1,400 cases and 60 deaths this year.

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