



To: CAHAN San Diego Participants

Date: July 15, 2022

From: Public Health Services

Health Advisory Update #3: Human Monkeypox, Testing at Commercial Laboratories

Key Messages

- There are now four commercial laboratories testing for monkeypox: Quest Diagnostics, LabCorp, Aegis Sciences, and Mayo Clinic Laboratories. Providers should submit specimens through commercial labs if possible.
- San Diego County Epidemiology Unit is updating the process for reporting of monkeypox.
- Healthcare providers should [report](#) all San Diego County (SDC) residents with suspect monkeypox cases submitted for testing to the [County Epidemiology Unit](#).

Situation

Currently there are ten cases of probable or confirmed monkeypox cases among San Diego County (SDC) residents. Detection of monkeypox cases continues in SDC but the risk to the general public remains low. To expand testing of monkeypox, testing has now become available through commercial laboratories which does not require County approval for testing.

Background

Commercial testing for monkeypox is now available through [Quest Diagnostics](#), [Aegis Sciences](#), [LabCorp](#), and [Mayo Clinic Laboratories](#). LabCorp, Aegis Sciences, and Mayo Clinic Laboratories are using the CDC's orthopoxvirus test (which detects all non-smallpox related orthopoxviruses, including monkeypox). The Quest assay is a real time PCR test developed by Quest that detects DNA of non-variola orthopoxviruses and Monkeypox virus (West African clade)—see Quest [FAQs](#). The CDC anticipates [additional commercial laboratories](#) will come online this month.

Providers should submit specimens through commercial labs if possible and follow specimen collection instructions provided by the laboratory as this may vary from lab to lab. Testing through commercial laboratories does not require approval by the County, however when providers submit samples through commercial laboratories, providers are requested to report suspected cases to the County. **Reporting of suspected cases at the time that testing is submitted allows the County to begin contact investigation and scheduling of [post exposure prophylaxis](#) (PEP) early.**

If testing is being requested through the Public Health Laboratory (PHL), use the accompanying instructions on specimen collection. It is recommended to collect the dry swabs for monkeypox testing during the initial patient visit and refrigerate while awaiting approval for testing from the County. Currently the County only accepts swabs transported in dry containers. Specimens transported in liquid viral media cannot be tested at the County PHL.

Actions Requested

1. Consider a diagnosis of monkeypox in people who present with an unusual or characteristic rash and who in the month preceding illness:
 - a. Reports having contact with a person or people with a similar appearing rash or who received a diagnosis of confirmed or probable monkeypox *or*
 - b. Had close or intimate in-person contact with individuals in a social network experiencing monkeypox activity, this includes men who have sex with men (MSM) who meet partners through an online website, digital application (“app”), or social event (e.g., a bar or party) *or*
 - c. Traveled outside the US to a country with confirmed cases of monkeypox or where monkeypox virus is endemic *or*
 - d. Had contact with a dead or live wild animal or exotic pet that is an African endemic species or used a product derived from such animals (e.g., game meat, creams, lotions, powders, etc.)
2. Report suspected cases of monkeypox to County Epidemiology Unit within one working day using a [Confidential Morbidity Report](#) faxed to 858-715-6458 or sent by secure email to epi-cdreporting.hhsa@sdcounty.ca.gov.
3. Instruct suspected cases to isolate until testing is resulted
4. To request monkeypox testing by the PHL collect swabs according to the attached instruction and then call 619-692-8499 (8 am to 5 pm, Monday through Friday).

Resources

- [U.S. Monkeypox Outbreak 2022: Situation Summary | Monkeypox | Poxvirus | CDC](#)
- [Clinical Recognition of Monkeypox | CDC](#)
- [Monitoring People Who Have Been Exposed | Monkeypox | Poxvirus | CDC](#)
- [Isolation and Infection Control: Home | Monkeypox | Poxvirus | CDC](#)
- [CAHAN Human Monkeypox | San Diego County](#)
- [Health Advisory: Meningococcal Infections and Monkeypox in Men who Have Sex with Men | San Diego County](#)

Thank you for your participation.

CAHAN San Diego

County of San Diego Health & Human Services Agency
Epidemiology and Immunization Services Branch
Phone: (619) 692-8499; Fax: (858) 715-6458
Urgent Phone for pm/weekends/holidays: (858) 565-5255
E-mail: cahan@sdcounty.ca.gov
Secure Website: <https://member.everbridge.net>
Public Website: <http://www.cahansandiego.com>

Swab Collection Guide for Monkeypox Testing Submitted to San Diego County Public Health

Step 1: Specimen collection.

- a. **Collect 2 swabs** by vigorously swabbing/brushing a lesion in duplicate. One set of swabs is for preliminary testing and the other set will be for confirmatory testing. Collect specimens from multiple lesions (at least 2). Make sure that both swabs touch the same lesion(s).
 - i. **Acceptable swab type** - sterile dry polyester or Dacron swabs, sterile nylon, polyester, or Dacron swab with a plastic, wood, or thin aluminum shaft. Do not use cotton swabs.
- b. Break off end of applicator of each swab into a 1.5 or 2-mL screw-capped tube with O-ring or place each entire swab in a separate dry sterile container.
- c. **Store lesion swabs in empty/dry sterile containers such as 15ml conical tube or urine cups with gasket seal.**
- d. Label specimen with patient name and date of birth.
- e. Refrigerate (2–8°C) or freeze (-20°C or lower) specimens within an hour after collection. Store refrigerated specimens for up to 7 days and frozen specimens for up to 60 days. Refrigerated specimens should be sent within 7 days of collection; frozen specimens should be shipped within 60 days of collection.

Step 2: Please complete San Diego County Public Health Laboratory requisition form for submission. Here is the online [SDC PHL fillable form](#).

Step 3: Please make sure to also complete Los Angeles County Public Health Laboratory sample submission form. Here is the online [LAC PHL fillable form](#).

Step 4: Once specimen collection is complete, deliver specimen to San Diego County Public Health Laboratory by using your own courier or your central laboratory courier, or, if you do not have a courier, please coordinate drop off with San Diego County Epidemiology case investigator.

Note to Sentinel/Provider central laboratories: Send specimens to San Diego County PHL for further testing. Specimens must be shipped as **Category B**. Please note that prior to shipment, contact San Diego Public Health Lab (619-990-1470) for notification. **(San Diego Health Lab address is 5570 Overland Ave, Suite 103, San Diego, CA 92123.)**

Currently, weekend testing is not offered. Please send specimen by COB Thursday.