



Renfrew County and District Health Unit

"Optimal Health for All in Renfrew County and District"

Public Health Alert

To: RCD Physicians, Nurse Practitioners and Acute Care

Date: Jan 12, 2023

From: Dr. Ian Gemmill, Acting Medical Officer of Health RCDHU

Subject: MPOX (formerly monkeypox) – Updated guidance and reminders

Dear Colleagues:

This Public Health Alert summarizes recent updates related to MPOX (formerly referred to as monkeypox) risk, vaccination, case and contact management, and resources for MPOX virus testing in the community.

WHO recommends new name for monkeypox disease

In line with recommendations from the WHO and updates being made by the Ministry of Health and Public Health Ontario (PHO), Renfrew County District Health Unit (RCDHU) will now be referring to monkeypox as MPOX.

MPOX Epidemiology & Risk

Since the provincial outbreak was declared in May 2022, there have been a total of 691 individuals who have tested positive for MPOX in Ontario. Over 99% of cases identify as male and the most common risk factor has been sexual or intimate contact with a new partner and/or having more than one partner. There are currently very low numbers of individuals testing positive for MPOX in Ontario, but there continues to be a risk for subsequent local spread. Visitors and returning travellers from outside Canada may be at higher risk.

Availability of Second Doses of Imvamune® (MPOX vaccine) for Individuals at High Risk

As per provincial guidance, Imvamune® should be offered as a two-dose primary series, with at least 28 days between first and second doses for individuals currently eligible for pre-exposure or post-exposure vaccination. Imvamune® eligibility and guidance can be found on the [Ontario Ministry of Health website](#).

RCDHU has been reaching out via telephone and/or email messaging to individuals who received their first dose at an RCDHU clinic, inviting them to book their second dose. Individuals who are eligible for a **first or second dose** can call 613-732-9436 or 1-800-267-1097 Monday to Friday from 8:00am to 4:00 pm to book an appointment.

141 Lake Street, Pembroke ON K8A 5L8

Phone: 613-732-3629 • Toll Free: 1-800-267-1097 • Fax: 613-735-3067 • www.rcdhu.com



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Requirement to Notify RCDHU of Individuals Being Tested for MPOX

MPOX is reportable immediately to RCDHU (this includes suspect cases: individuals being tested for whom lab results are not yet available)

- Monday to Friday from 8:00am to 4:00pm: Call 613-732-3629 or 1-800-267-1097, or fax 613-735-3067
- After hours, on weekends, or holidays: 613-735-9926

If patients are being tested for MPOX, instruct them to self-isolate until they receive a negative test result. RCDHU will follow up with and advise on next steps for all those with positive results. RCDHU's MPOX web page [Monkeypox Virus | Renfrew County and District Health Unit \(rcdhu.com\)](#) provides [self-isolation instructions for patients](#). The Ministry of Health's [Recommendations for the management of cases and contacts of monkeypox \(MPX\) in Ontario](#) provides additional information.

Testing for MPOX in Community Settings

Clinical assessment and testing for MPOX can be performed in community clinics. RCDHU has resources on our [Monkeypox Virus | Renfrew County and District Health Unit \(rcdhu.com\)](#) that are meant to supplement provincial testing information from [Public Health Ontario Laboratory \(PHOL\)](#) and [Ontario Health](#).

As noted in the [provincial testing information](#), it is recommended that swabs taken from skin lesions or submitting skin lesion material (e.g. scab) is the most effective method for detection of MPOX. If N/P swabs are all that is possible, blood should also be drawn.

If patients are being directed to a community lab for specimen collection, contact the local specimen collection centre to confirm that they can accommodate, as they will need to ensure IPAC protocols are adhered to.

- Dynacare Customer Care: 1-800-565-5721
- LifeLabs Customer Care: 1-877-849-3637
- Advise the patient of appropriate precautions to take if entering a community lab as per the [Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Monkeypox in Health Care Settings](#).
- Patients should wash their hands, wear a medical mask, and cover any lesions to the best extent possible.
- Ensure the patient has the appropriate laboratory requisition.