



# County of Santa Cruz



## HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

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## PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY

<b>To:</b>	<b>Santa Cruz County Healthcare Providers</b>
<b>From:</b>	<b>Lisa B. Hernandez, MD, MPH, County Public Health Officer</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Mpox Update: Increased Clade II Cases in Santa Cruz County</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>November 4, 2025</b>

### **Situational Update:**

Santa Cruz County is currently experiencing an increase in cases of clade II mpox. Clade II mpox has been circulating in California since 2022 and cases are largely among gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men and their social networks. The increase has been most pronounced in the San Francisco Bay Area, though cases have been reported across multiple counties. Cases have commonly reported travel between counties and sexual exposure associated with attending clubs, venues, parties, or other social events.

On October 17, 2025, CDPH released a [Health Advisory](#) noting three new unrelated confirmed clade I mpox cases in Southern California with no history of recent international travel, indicating community spread. At this time, clade I mpox has not been shown to be more transmissible than clade II, though transmission studies are ongoing. Historically clade I mpox has been more severe and shown higher mortality rates, however the risk to the general public remains low. Clade I mpox has not been detected in Santa Cruz County.

### **ACTIONS REQUESTED OF HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS**

Promptly report all suspected mpox cases to the **Communicable Disease Unit (CDU)** at **831-454-4838** or [hsacd@santacruzcountyca.gov](mailto:hsacd@santacruzcountyca.gov).

### **Vaccination**

- Identify patients who may benefit from vaccination for mpox per [assessment of risk factors](#)

- Vaccine can be given as post exposure prophylaxis (PEP) to prevent infection or reduce severity of infection when given promptly (within 14 days post exposure) after close contact with a confirmed case.
- If vaccine is not available in your practice, please direct patients to the [mpox vaccine locator](#).
- The vaccine is covered by most insurances including Medi-Cal.
- Booster doses are not indicated for people who have previously received two vaccine doses at least 28 days apart or who have recovered from confirmed mpox infection.
  - If a patient has received one dose of mpox vaccine >28 days previously, administer second dose as soon as possible.

### **Clinical Recognition and Screening**

1. Consider mpox as a differential diagnosis in sexually active patients with rash, lesions, proctitis, or compatible signs and symptoms.
2. Conduct risk assessments including recent sexual practices, international travel history (especially to sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, or countries with clade I mpox outbreaks), and contact with individuals who have traveled internationally.

*Testing is warranted among vaccinated persons or those with previous mpox infection if compatible signs and symptoms are present.*

### **Infection Control**

- Promptly room patients presenting with a rash
- Have patients wear a well-fitted face mask and cover lesions with clothing or bandages
- Healthcare staff should wear the following PPE when assisting someone with mpox symptoms: gloves, gown, eye protection, fit-tested N95 respirator
- Staff cleaning rooms after the patient visit should wear full PPE and use an EPA-registered disinfectant with an emerging viral pathogen claim ([EPA List Q](#)).

### **Testing and Specimen Collection**

Orthopox/mpox tests are available through many commercial laboratories.

- Follow the guidelines posted by each lab for specimen collection

Examples of locally available commercial tests:

- Quest Diagnostics - Mpox Virus DNA, Qualitative, Real-Time PCR
- Labcorp - Mpox (Orthopoxvirus), DNA, PCR

**If commercial lab testing is not available for your facility, please contact the Communicable Disease Unit (CDU) at 831-454-4838 to arrange Public Health Lab testing.**

**If clade I mpox is suspected due to history of travel or contact to a clade I case, please promptly contact CDU at 831-454-4838 to arrange appropriate testing. To report clade I suspects after hours please call (831) 471-1170.**

**Specimen Collection Guidelines:**

- Collect specimens from at least 2 lesions using 2 sterile synthetic swabs per lesion
- Vigorously swab each lesion and place into appropriate sterile container labeled with anatomic location

\*Do NOT use antiseptic or any topical preparation before swabbing

\*\*Do NOT de-roof or aspirate lesion(s) to reduce exposure

**Isolation Guidance**

Any patients being tested for suspected clade I or II mpox should be advised to:

- Isolate at home, away from others, pending results
- Home isolation should continue for the duration of mpox illness, until the rash is healed
- Isolation, disinfection, and other precautions within the household are recommended

**For detailed information on treatment, vaccination recommendations, and additional clinical guidance, please refer to:**

CDPH Health Advisory: Community Spread of Clade I Mpox Within California

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OPA/Pages/CAHAN/Community-Spread-of-Clade-I-Mpox-Within-California.aspx#>

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

**Healthcare Providers**

- California Prevention Training Center [Mpox Clinical Recognition & Testing Overview](#)
- CDC Mpox Clinical Signs and Symptoms <https://www.cdc.gov/mpox/hcp/clinical-signs/index.html>
- CDC Specimen Collection Guidelines <https://www.cdc.gov/monkeypox/hcp/diagnosis-testing/collecting-specimens.html>
- CDC Infection Control in Healthcare Settings <https://www.cdc.gov/monkeypox/hcp/infection-control/healthcare-settings.html>

**Health Alert:** conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

**Health Advisory:** provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

**Health Update:** provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.