

Monkeypox

Agent: Monkeypox virus (genus *Orthopoxvirus*)

Mode of Transmission: Transmission to humans from an infected animal by bite or direct contact with lesions or body fluids. Though less common, infection can be transmitted directly from person to person by respiratory droplets or contact with body fluids of an infected person, or indirectly by contact with virus-contaminated objects, such as bedding.

Signs/Symptoms: Similar to smallpox, though more mild. Initial symptoms include fever, headache, backache, sore throat, cough and swollen lymph nodes. Three days after fever onset, a rash develops.

Prevention: Contact with exotic or wild mammals that originate from areas where monkeypox has occurred should be avoided.

Other Important Information: Monkeypox is a rare disease that occurs primarily in central and western Africa. In 2003, a monkeypox outbreak in the United States was identified among persons exposed to native prairie dogs that had contact with imported African rodents.

In 2004, monkeypox became a reportable disease in Virginia. No cases of monkeypox have ever been reported in Virginia.