

New York City declares monkeypox a public health emergency

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Healthcare workers with New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene help people register for the monkeypox vaccine at one of the City's vaccination sites, Tuesday, July 26, 2022, in New York. U.S. health officials said Thursday that the country's monkeypox outbreak can still be controlled and eliminated, despite rising case numbers and concerns about limited vaccine supplies in many parts of the country. Credit: AP Photo/Mary Altaffer

Officials in New York City declared a public health emergency due to the spread of the [monkeypox virus](#) Saturday, calling the city "the epicenter" of the outbreak.

The announcement Saturday by Mayor Eric Adams and health Commissioner Ashwin Vasan said as many as 150,000 city residents could be at risk of infection. The declaration will allow officials to issue emergency orders under the city health code and amend code provisions to implement measures to help slow the spread.

In the last two days, New York Gov. Kathy Hochul declared a state disaster emergency declaration and the state health department called monkeypox an "imminent threat to [public health](#)."

New York had recorded 1,345 cases as of Friday, according to data compiled by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. California had the second-most, with 799.

"We will continue to work with our federal partners to secure more doses as soon as they become available," Adams and Vasan said in the statement. "This outbreak must be met with urgency, action, and resources, both nationally and globally, and this declaration of a [public health emergency](#) reflects the seriousness of the moment."

The World Health Organization declared monkeypox a global health emergency on July 23 and San Francisco's mayor on Thursday [announced a state of emergency](#) over the growing number of cases.



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A health professional prepares a dose of a Monkeypox vaccine at the Edison municipal vaccination centre in Paris Wednesday July 27, 2022. Public health officials warn that moves by rich countries to buy large quantities of monkeypox vaccine, while declining to share doses with Africa, could leave millions of people unprotected against a more dangerous version of the disease and risk continued spillovers of the virus into humans. Credit: Alain Jocard, Pool via AP, File

The once-[rare disease](#) has been established in parts of central and west Africa for decades but was not known to spark large outbreaks beyond the continent or to spread widely among people until May, when authorities detected dozens of epidemics in Europe, North America and elsewhere.

To date, [there have been more than 22,000 monkeypox cases reported in nearly 80 countries](#) since May, with about 75 suspected deaths in Africa, mostly in Nigeria and Congo. On Friday, Brazil and Spain reported deaths linked to monkeypox, the first reported outside Africa. Spain reported a second monkeypox death Saturday.

The virus spreads through prolonged and close skin-to-skin contact as well as sharing bedding, towels and clothing. In Europe and North America, it has spread primarily among men who have sex with men, though health officials emphasize that the virus can infect anyone.

The type of monkeypox virus identified in this outbreak is rarely fatal, and people usually recover within weeks. But the lesions and blisters caused by the virus are painful.

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