WHAT HOTELS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT MONKEYPOX

The CDC (and OSHA) do not provide specific guidelines on monkeypox for the hotel industry. No specific disinfectants or laundry detergents are recommended. The current Safe Stay guidelines are applicable.

- The threat from a monkeypox outbreak to the hotel industry is low. The prevalence is relatively low, and there have been no deaths reported in the US since the outbreak began. The infection is preventable and treatable.
- The US declaration of a public health emergency helps the Administration obtain resources for a coordinated response; it is not a cause for alarm for the hotel industry.
- The only mode of transmission of monkeypox during this outbreak is intimate personal contact with an infected person. Though respiratory transmission is possible, it has not been observed in this outbreak so far.
- There is a limited supply of vaccines that are used to prevent monkeypox. Health authorities recommend vaccination only for people in certain occupations and others at risk, but vaccination is not yet recommended for non-healthcare-related occupations or the general public. Previous vaccination against smallpox is generally effective at preventing monkeypox. The Biden Administration has released a fact sheet with the “aim to expand vaccination for individuals at risk and make testing more convenient for healthcare providers and patients across the country.”
- Monkeypox is a DNA virus, and SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) is an RNA virus. The two are unrelated, and people should rely on authoritative sources for more information.

BACKGROUND

- Monkeypox is caused by monkeypox virus, a member of the Orthopoxvirus genus in the family Poxviridae that was first described in 1958 in monkeys used for research; however, that name is misleading because monkeys are not the primary host animal for this infection.
  - Other Orthopoxviruses include variola (smallpox), vaccinia (the virus used to vaccinate against smallpox), cowpox, and several others that infect only certain species. Smallpox, for example, infects only humans.
  - Monkeypox causes infection in animals but infects humans at times. The natural animal reservoir for monkeypox is not clearly known, but it is suspected to be large rodents. Endemic human cases of monkeypox occur in tropical rainforest areas of Central and West Africa and are occasionally exported to other regions.
- The most common avenue of transmission of monkeypox is through direct contact with active skin lesions, or theoretically through contact with material that was contaminated via contact with active skin lesions (fomite).
  - Scientists believe that monkeypox can be transmitted via respiratory droplets, but at the current time, there is no evidence to support respiratory or aerosol transmission. Theoretically, close and prolonged contact would be needed for respiratory transmission, so the CDC recommends mask wearing under such circumstances.
  - Monkeypox begins, as many viral infections do, with fever, headache, muscle aches, chills, and exhaustion. Swollen lymph nodes and backaches are also seen. In roughly one to three days, the characteristic skin rash appears, and it goes through several stages. At some point, the rash becomes characteristic of poxvirus rashes.
  - The key point here is that the illness can last two to four weeks and is transmissible by contact until the lesions heal. In this case, contact tracing and isolation are very important.
  - Although not considered a traditional sexually transmitted disease, close contact (such as kissing, cuddling, or sex) has been implicated in the recent outbreak, according to the CDC.

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