THE ADVISOR
MONTHLY COMPLIANCE COMMUNICATOR

MONKEYPOX: Infection Control and Prevention

In the June edition of our newsletter, we reported the US had 20 confirmed cases of monkeypox in a handful of states with the first case being documented on May 17, 2022. As of July 25, 2022, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is tracking 3,487 cases in 45 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), worldwide more than 16,000 cases of monkeypox have been reported across more than 70 countries so far this year, and the number of confirmed infections rose 77% from late June through early July. Men who have sex with men are currently at highest risk of infection.

WHO now views the outbreak as a global health emergency and feels that a coordinated global response is needed to reduce the spread of the illness. New York and San Francisco have also declared a public health emergency to address the growing number of cases.

Early symptoms of monkeypox may be confused with COVID-19 infection, especially now that these case numbers are rising. Symptoms usually start within 3 weeks of exposure to the virus. Once flu-like symptoms begin most people will develop a rash 1 – 4 days later. Initially patients presenting with infection reported international travel within the 21 days prior to symptom onset, but since late June numbers that are linked to local community transmission are increasing.
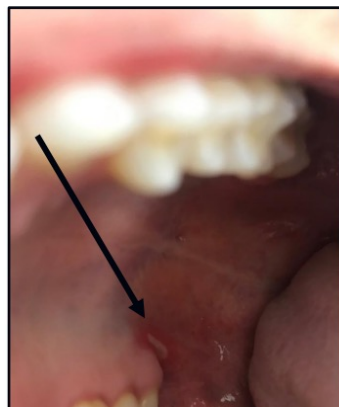
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Infected individuals may experience all or only a few of the symptoms listed below.

- Fever

- Headache

- Muscle aches and backache

- Swollen lymph nodes

- Chills

- Exhaustion

- Respiratory symptoms (e.g. sore throat, nasal congestion, or cough)

- A rash that may be located on or near the genitals (penis, testicles, labia, and vagina) or anus, but could also be on other areas like the hands, feet, chest, face, or mouth.

  ◊ The rash may first occur in the oral cavity.

  ◊ The rash will go through several stages, including scabs, before healing.

  ◊ The rash can look like pimples or blisters and may be painful or itchy.

Photos courtesy of the CDC
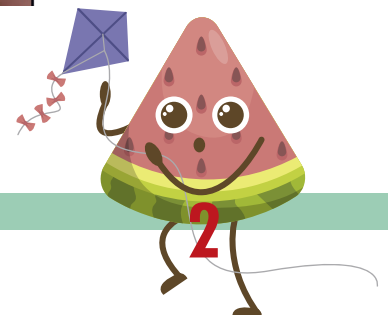
Monkeypox can be spread from the time symptoms start until the rash has healed, all scabs have fallen off, and a fresh layer of skin has formed. The illness typically lasts 2-4 weeks.

Human-to-human transmission of monkeypox virus occurs by direct contact with lesion material or from exposure to respiratory secretions. Risk of transmission in healthcare is highly unlikely but it is important for all healthcare workers, including those in oral health care to consider this diagnosis based on presenting complaints or physical exam and to utilize the appropriate protections.

When caring for suspect or confirmed patients with monkeypox the following infection control measures should be in place.

- Patient should be placed in a single-person room with the door remaining closed.

- Transport or movement of the patient outside of the room should be limited. If the patient must be moved, the patient should wear a well-fitting surgical mask. Any exposed skin lesions should be covered by a sheet or a gown.

- PPE used by healthcare personnel who enter the patient's room should include:

  ◊ Gown

  ◊ Gloves

  ◊ Eye protection (i.e., goggles or a face shield that covers the front and sides of the face)

  ◊ NIOSH-approved N95 filtering facepiece or equivalent, or higher-level respirator

- Intubation and extubation, and any procedures likely to spread oral secretions should be performed in an airborne infection isolation room.

Once the patient is discharged the room should be cleaned and disinfected using an EPA approved hospital level disinfectant on List Q with an emerging pathogen kill claim. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for use to ensure elimination of the virus. Any disposable items (barrier covers, used gauze) should be managed as regulated medical waste. Cleaning activities such as dry dusting, sweeping, or vacuuming should be avoided as this could resuspend dried material from lesions.
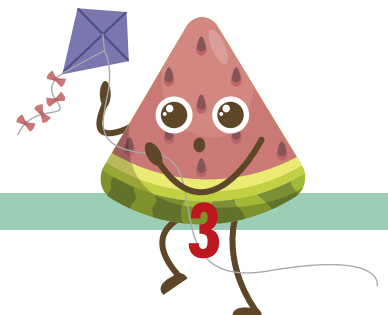
INFECTION CONTROL

What if I am exposed while at work?

Transmission of monkeypox through workplace exposure occurs very rarely and requires prolonged close contact with the infected individual. Brief interactions when following Standard Precautions and utilization of the appropriate PPE generally do not warrant any post exposure prophylaxis (PEP). However, workers caring for an infected patient should be alert to the development of any symptoms of the illness for 21 days after the last exposure.

If a healthcare worker should have an exposure and they were not wearing the appropriate PPE, they should participate in active surveillance, which includes temperature monitoring for 21 days post exposure and symptom screening prior to entry to work. They do not need to be excluded from work unless they become symptomatic.

High risk exposures described by the CDC include the following and would require an evaluation of risk by a qualified healthcare provider and PEP.

- Unprotected contact between a person's skin or mucous membranes and the skin, lesions, or bodily fluids from a patient (e.g., any sexual contact, inadvertent splashes of patient saliva to the eyes or oral cavity of a person, ungloved contact with patient), or contaminated materials (e.g., linens, clothing)

- Being inside the patient's room or within 6 feet of a patient during any procedures that may create aerosols from oral secretions, skin lesions, or resuspension of dried exudates (e.g., shaking of soiled linens), without wearing an N95 or equivalent respirator (or higher) and eye protection.

While the risk of transmission of monkeypox is very low risk in a healthcare environment it is still very important for all workers to be aware of this emerging virus and use appropriate protections. Early detection and appropriate reporting to the local health department, along with vaccination may be the key to reducing the numbers of infections and preventing the next pandemic.
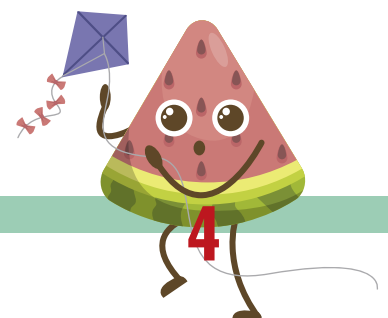
Payment Apps and HIPAA

Mobile payment apps like PayPal make sending and receiving payments to nearly anyone easier than ever. These apps are convenient, and the fees can be much lower than traditional payment processing methods. It is very important to know what a payment app or software does with your information, not only as a personal consumer, but as the owner or manager of a healthcare practice. Before choosing an app, decide if it will be used only for payment transaction processing, or if you intend to use additional features such as reporting, invoicing, and analysis.

This is an important decision point because these additional features will most likely create a HIPAA Business Associate relationship between your practice and the app vendor. This means you will need to choose an app that offers a Business Associate Agreement (BAA). It also means that you will have fewer app choices. Simply processing a payment transaction does not require a BAA under HIPAA. However, you will still need to monitor how the app is used or updated by the vendor. You can also use the apps settings to restrict the ability to use additional features or add to practice's account that could require a BAA.

Whether you are simply processing payments or adding services that will require a BAA, there are a few more things you should know about a payment app before you use it. Most of the following information can usually be found on the app vendor's website under headings like About Us, Resources, or in the terms and conditions and privacy policy for the app.
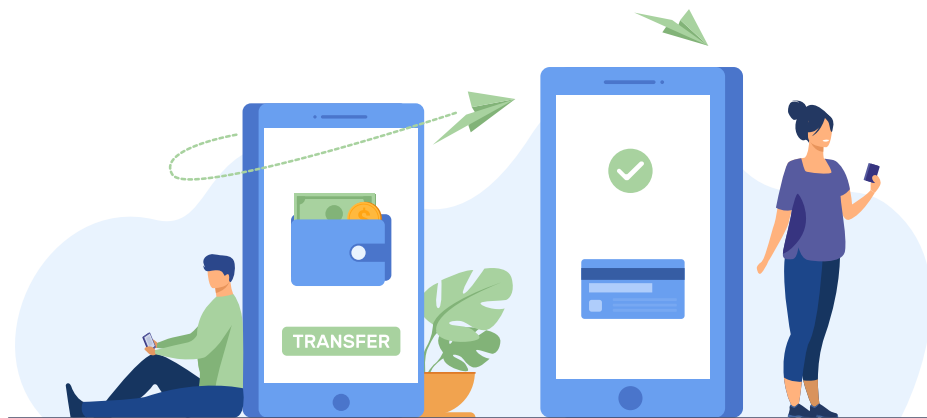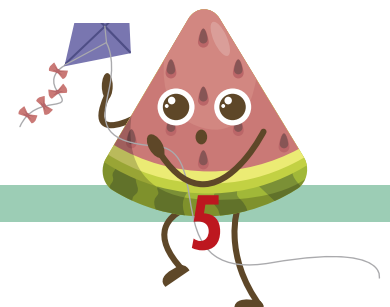
HIPAA COMPLIANCE

Five critical features to consider when looking into using a payment app:

1. Does the app comply with the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS)? This standard is set by the five largest credit card companies designed to help reduce costly consumer and bank data breaches. Search for the term "validated point-to-point encryption" or P2PE on the PCI Security Standards Council's website.

2. The app vendor cannot use any information from your account (your practice's information or information from transactions with your patients) for their marketing purposes or share it with third parties. This is a HIPAA violation even if you are limiting your use to processing payment transactions only.

3. If you want to keep a patient's credit or debit card on file, be sure the app stores that information in a secure/encrypted manner. This also requires compliance with the PCI DSS mentioned above.

4. Choose an app that allows you to disable the auto-generated receipt feature. You should not text or email receipts to your patients without their authorization and it is best to avoid it anyway to protect the security of your patient's information.

5. Do not include any information related to the visit like insurance ID#, treatment/service, etc. when you process a payment. This is PHI that is not necessary to process payment and increases your practice's risk.

There are many popular payment processing apps that have partnered with EHRs and practice management systems. They can be used in your practice's existing workflows. Using a built-in app is a good way to avoid some of the risks mentioned above. Whichever choice you make for your practice, it is always worth the time and effort to check into any vendor's credentials when entrusting it with patient and financial information.
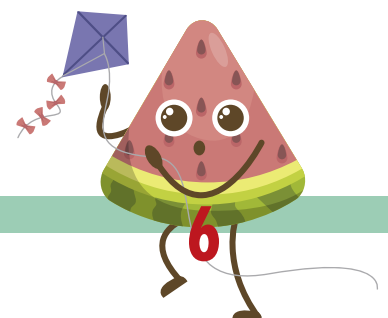
UPCOMING INDUSTRY EVENTS

TMC to attend Upcoming Industry Events

TMC is bringing the FUN to the fall schedule of professional events. Come by our booth to meet us, win a prize, pick up a giveaway, and find out how you can save on your compliance needs.

North Carolina Dental Society Women's Summit
Friday, August 26, 2022, in Cary, NC

Total Medical Compliance is proud to be an endorsed partner of the NCDS. TMC is sponsoring NCDS at the Women's Summit 2022 to be held at The Umstead Hotel & Spa in Cary, NC. This one-day in-person event will focus on leadership, financial planning, managing a staff, and keeping attendees and their co-workers motivated during tough times. Join us as our TMC consultant S'Elaina Wyatt-Lefevre will be at our booth with compliance options and savings for you. Check it out!

South Carolina Dental Association Summer Expo
### Friday, August 26, 2022, in Columbia, SC

The SCDA has partnered with Total Medical Compliance to provide quality OSHA and HIPAA compliance training to all its members. Come and meet TMC's Renee Russell and Jim Gray at our booth in the Columbia Convention Center during this one-day event. They will have prizes and giveaways as well as OSHA, HIPAA, and infection control compliance options with a special savings for you. Register now!

South Carolina MGMA Fall Forum
September 8, 2022, in Columbia, SC

Come and meet TMC's Renee Russell and Jim Gray at our booth in the Cooperative Convention Center for this one-day event. They will have prizes and giveaway as well as information about OSHA, HIPAA, and infection control compliance services. Register today for this full day of educational offerings!

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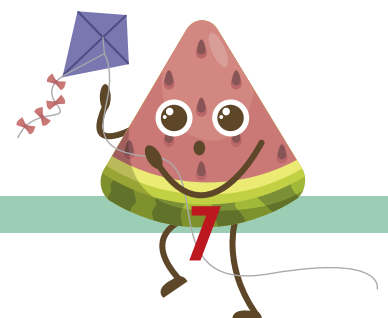
UPCOMING INDUSTRY EVENTS

South Carolina Dental Hygienists' Association Symposium 2022
September 30 – October 1, 2022, Myrtle Beach, SC

Join us at the Embassy Suites at the beach! This event is designed FOR dental hygienists BY dental hygienists. Fun and informative courses will enhance your skills and knowledge. **TMC's Renee Russell, RDH, will be speaking on Infection Control and OSHA Updates**. We will also have Jim Gray at our booth with great prizes and giveaways along with information on our OSHA, HIPAA, and Infection Control compliance offerings. Register Now!

Virginia MGMA Fall Conference
**October 2-4, 2022, in Virginia Beach, VA**

TMC's president Bill Fivek will be hosting a booth at this fall event held at the beautiful Marriott Virginia Beach Oceanfront hotel. Come for the prizes and giveaways and stay to find out about TMC's OSHA and HIPAA compliance services. Join us!

Come for the education. Stay for a vacation!

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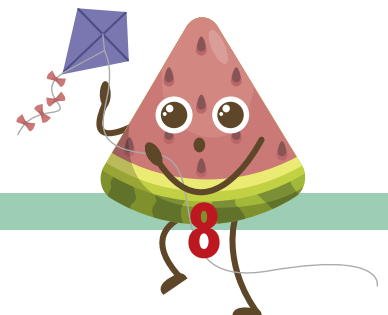
COMPLIANCE

IT'S YOUR CALL

OSHA:

How should our office prepare for persons who have been exposed to monkeypox?

HIPAA:

TRUE OR FALSE: If your practice uses a payment app for payment processing or transaction-only purposes a BAA is not required.

Click Here
For Blog Link

Security Scout

Of all the known cyberattacks that cause a data breach, phishing is the most expensive to remedy. A successful phishing attack most commonly reveals usernames and passwords, which paves the way to the data breach resulting in an average cost of $4.9 million for victim organizations worldwide.

The costs remain the highest in the healthcare industry for the 12th year in a row. So far, breach costs in 2022 have increased by nearly $1 million, now totaling over $10 million. The U.S. healthcare industry is the most expensive, with average costs of $9.4 million.

Visit our blog for a handy infographic from TMC in your team to stay aware and avoid phishing attempts!

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INSTRUCTIONS

Print and post newsletter in office for staff review. Each member should sign this form when completed. Keep on file as proof of training on these topics.

IN THIS ISSUE