

# Family Guide to Home Care SMALLPOX

## Family Guide to Home Care

If you or any member of your family has any of the following symptoms, go to the nearest hospital or treatment center **NOW**.

- **High fever • extreme fatigue • head and body aches**
- **vomiting • rash that turns into pus-filled lesions**

If you have been exposed or suspect exposure to **Smallpox** go **Now** to a public health dispensing site for preventive care.

## Stay Away From Those Who Are Sick

Smallpox is very contagious but **Cannot** be caught from animals or insects. **Smallpox** is most contagious when a rash appears; however, it is sometimes contagious in its early stages usually marked by fever and body aches, sometimes vomiting.

People can get **Smallpox** by being in direct, close contact (usually within 6 feet) with an infectious person. The virus is found in droplets of saliva released when the infectious person talks, coughs or sneezes. Direct contact with materials such as bedding and clothing contaminated with the virus is another way people can become infected. Only people can spread the virus.

## Avoid Affected Areas

Avoid contact with those who are sick.

## Get Your Family Vaccinated

Get your family vaccinated. If in an area that has an outbreak of **Smallpox**, public health officials will set up vaccination dispensing sites. A person who has had close contact with an

infected person can greatly reduce the chance of becoming sick by seeking vaccination immediately.

### **Use Everyday Sanitation Techniques**

Using “common sense” sanitation techniques can lessen your chance of exposure.

- Wash hands frequently, especially after eating or drinking, after using the bathroom facilities.
- Use a solution of 1 part household bleach to 9 parts water or standard hospital-grade disinfectant for cleaning surfaces. Leave on for 30 minutes.
- Disinfect bathroom and kitchen areas daily.

### **Seek Help**

If the person is having trouble breathing, go the closest hospital or treatment center **Now**.

### **If You Are Vaccinated...**

A successful **Smallpox** vaccination will create a red and itchy bump at the vaccine site in three (3) to four (4) days. In the first week, the bump becomes a large blister, fills with pus and begins to drain. The blister will begin to dry up and form a scab during the second week. The scab will fall off during the third week and leave a small scar.

People who are vaccinated for the first time most likely will have a stronger reaction than those who are being revaccinated.

It is very important to take care of the vaccinated area. The vaccination does NOT contain the **Smallpox** virus and cannot spread or cause **Smallpox**. However, the vaccine does contain another “live” virus called vaccinia that can spread to other parts

of the body or to other people from the vaccination site. Proper care of the vaccinated area will prevent that from happening. Health care professionals will give specific instructions as to the care you should take, when you or your family members become vaccinated. Follow all post vaccination instructions **Carefully**. Those instructions will include:

- Do not touch or let others touch your vaccinated area before it is healed.
- Do not touch or let others touch bandages or clothing that have become contaminated with the virus present in the vaccine.
- Cover the vaccinated area until the scab has separated on its own, with loose gauze secured with medical tape.
- Wear a shirt as extra protection.
- Keep the site dry.
- Change the bandage every day or every other day.
- Wash hands with soap and warm water after direct contact with the bandage or vaccination site.
- Put bandages in sealed plastic bags before throwing away.
- Keep a separate laundry hamper for clothing, towels, bedding or other items that may have come in direct contact with the vaccinated area or drainage from the area.
- Wash clothing or other materials that come in contact with the vaccinated area, using hot water, detergent and bleach. Wash hands after handling clothing and other materials in contact with the area.
- When the scab comes off, throw it away in a sealed plastic bag and wash hands after discarding.

## **Take Care of Yourself**

You will not be able to care for others if you do not also care for yourself.

- Get plenty of rest, drink lots of liquids, maintain a healthy diet.
- If you are taking an antibiotic, follow all instructions and continue to take the medications for the length of time recommended. If you develop a fever or have flu-like symptoms, seek medical care immediately.

## **Where to Get More Information**

- Stay tuned to local media for ongoing updates
- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** Public Response Hotline:
  - 888.246.2675 (English)
  - 888.246.2857 (Spanish)
  - 888.874.2646 (TTY)
- Texas Department of State Health Services Web site:  
[www.dshs.state.tx.us](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Web site:  
[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

- Northeast Texas Public Health District web site:  
[www.healthpreparedness.org](http://www.healthpreparedness.org)