Pets

Keep household pets away from the vaccination site and bandages that covered it. The same simple steps that prevent spreading the virus elsewhere on the body or to somebody else (bandages, long sleeves, hand washing) will keep the virus from reaching pets.

Concerns with bathing

The vaccinee may continue normal bathing or showering, but shouldn't let the site get soaked or scrub the vaccination site. The vaccinee should ensure the site is completely covered while showering. After showering, the vaccinee should remove the old bandage, pat or blot-dry the vaccination site with a paper towel or tissue and place in a sealed plastic bag with the old bandage. A new bandage should be placed on the site, followed by hand washing. Public towels (e.g., at gyms) should not be used.

It is not necessary to sanitize a tub or sink prior to other family member use. Surfaces that touch a dirty bandage, or the vaccination site, should be cleaned with disinfectant, bleach, or hot soapy water.

Changing the bandage

Bandages should be kept in place until a change is needed, for example, when there is enough drainage from the vaccination site to begin to soak the pad. They can be changed more often, if desired. Always wash your hands with soap and hot water after changing a bandage. Use a non-stick bandage.

Getting rid of used bandages

Discard bandages in sealed single or double plastic bags and add bleach to kill the virus. When the scab falls off, it should be placed in a sealed plastic bag with a little bleach and thrown away. Wash your hands with soap and hot water.

Laundry

Do not share clothes, towels, or toiletries with somebody who just got a smallpox vaccination. The vaccinee should separate his/her clothes and towels from the rest of the family. To decrease the risk of spreading the virus, the vaccinated member should launder his/her own clothing and linens in hot water with detergent or bleach to kill the virus and thoroughly wash his/her hands afterwards.

Exercising

A waterproof bandage should be used if exercising enough to cause a sweat. Vaccinated members should avoid swimming pools and hot tubs for 30 days and/or until the site has healed. Contact sports such as wrestling, boxing, and basketball should also be avoided.

➲ *For information about vaccine or policy,*
Military Vaccine (MILVAX) Agency:
www.smallpox.mil www.vaccines.mil
E-Mail: **vaccines@amedd.army.mil**
Toll-Free: **877.GET.VACC (877-438-8222)**

➲ *For medical advice about smallpox vaccinations,*
DoD Vaccine Clinical Call Center:
Toll-Free: **866.210.6469.** If calling from outside the United States refer to calling instructions at
www.business.att.com/default/?pageid=bt_intl_dialing_guide&branchid=bt

➲ *For clinical consultation or exemption assistance,*
DoD Vaccine Healthcare Centers: www.vhcinfo.org
E-Mail: **https://askvhc.wramc.amedd.army.mil**
Phone: **202.782.0411**

➲ **CDC National Immunization Hotline: 800.232.2522**

SOMEBODY IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD JUST GOT VACCINATED AGAINST SMALLPOX

What should you do?

By following the simple steps below, you can help keep your household safe:

1. **Bandages (to prevent touching the site)**
2. **Sleeves (long enough to cover the site)**
3. **Hand washing (with soap and hot water)**

The Smallpox Vaccine

Smallpox vaccine is made from a virus called vaccinia. The vaccine cannot cause smallpox. This vaccine was given to millions of Americans, including service members during World War I, World War II, and until the 1980's. It was so effective that we continue to use this vaccine today. Between December 2002 and January 2008, more than 1.6 million service members received smallpox vaccination.

Once vaccinated, the virus stays on the skin's surface for about 30 days and/or until the vaccine site has healed. It can spread by touch. This means other people can contract the vaccinia virus and get infected. The vaccinia virus is NOT spread by coughing, sneezing, or sexual contact.

The normal course of a smallpox vaccination

If vaccination is successful, a red and itchy bump will develop 3-4 days following vaccination. A few days later, the bump becomes a pus-filled blister. During the second week, the blister begins to dry up and a scab forms. The scab falls off after about 2 to 4 weeks, leaving a scar.

Anyone who does not get the expected reaction at the vaccination site should report to his/her healthcare provider.

Most people have mild symptoms after vaccination, such as itching at the vaccination site, swollen glands, fever, headache, body ache, or fatigue. These symptoms usually peak 3 to 12 days after vaccination.

How the vaccinia virus can spread

When around others in social settings like church, theaters, or the mall, the vaccinee will need to be mindful of spreading the vaccinia virus. Vaccinees should not touch or allow others to touch the vaccination site. Vaccinated persons need to be careful when around others and follow the three simple steps (bandages, sleeves, hand washing).

In a household, people have much more intimate contact than in work sites or other social settings. Because household contact is more intimate, some people may be asked to separate themselves from family members who are at risk (e.g., pregnant woman, immune suppressed) for 30 days and/or until the site is healed. In most cases, normal family and household contact can continue, but avoid wrestling or other close physical contact that could brush against the vaccination site.

The risk of passing the vaccinia virus to a child is extremely low if the vaccinated person follows the three steps (bandages, sleeves, hand washing). For that child to spread the vaccinia virus to another child in a day care setting would be even rarer.

Keeping the virus from spreading from the vaccination site

Don't touch the vaccination site. If you touch it by accident, wash your hands right away. Don't let others touch the vaccination site or materials that touched the vaccination site.

Have the vaccinated person use a bandage to prevent touching the site by accident. Long sleeves add another layer of protection. Wash your hands with soap and hot water after changing bandages, before and after going to the bathroom, and anytime you touch a vaccination site or materials that touch it. Alcohol-based cleansers work well too, when soap and hot water is not available.

Discard bandages in sealed single or double plastic bags and add bleach to kill the virus.

Possible spread of the virus

If unvaccinated family members or friends develop symptoms that might be related to smallpox vaccination, they should go to their usual source of care (such as a military clinic or primary care provider/family physician) and explain that a family member just got the smallpox vaccine and that they are concerned about the symptoms.

Sleeping arrangements

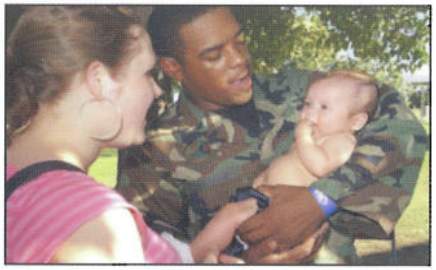
Sleeping in the same bed as somebody who just got vaccinated is okay unless there is a medical reason for you not to get the smallpox vaccine. The main reasons you would not be able to get the vaccine would be: having a chronic skin condition (such as eczema or atopic dermatitis), having a disease or taking a medication that weakens your immune system, or pregnancy.

In some cases, service members will be separated from their family for 30 days and/or until the site is healed if their family members have medical exemptions. While this separation may be hard on the family, it is to protect those individuals that cannot get vaccinated.

If none of the medical exemptions apply to you or another member of your immediate household, then your family member who was just vaccinated should follow the three simple steps: use bandages, wear long sleeves, and perform proper hand washing.

Intimate contact

It is okay to have sex with somebody who just got vaccinated against smallpox. The virus is NOT transmitted by sexual contact, but the vaccinia virus can be spread by touching the vaccination site. So, you can continue intimate relationships (except when there is a medical reason for you not to get the smallpox vaccine), but make sure the vaccination site is covered and neither of you touch it. You want to avoid spreading the virus to sensitive body parts. Make sure the vaccinee follows the three simple steps: use bandages, wear long sleeves, and perform proper hand washing.

Spending time with infants

Vaccinated people should avoid handling babies or breastfeeding for at least 30 days and/or until the vaccination site has healed.