



After you get the Smallpox Vaccine

Protecting pets and other animals

About the Smallpox Vaccine

The smallpox vaccine does not contain smallpox, but it does contain a virus called vaccinia. If you receive a smallpox vaccination, you can spread the vaccinia virus from your vaccination site until it has completely healed and the scab has fallen off, usually in about three weeks. Until that time, you will need to take precautions to avoid infecting yourself or others who come in close personal contact with you.

Some pets and other animals may also be susceptible to the vaccinia virus; a few special precautions will minimize the chance of spreading the virus to them as well.

Protecting Pets and Other Animals

Different animals may have varying risks of illness from exposure to the vaccinia virus. The best way to protect all pets and other animals is to follow these guidelines for three weeks (or until you are no longer contagious, see above) after you have been vaccinated:

- Do not let animals sniff or have any direct contact with your vaccination site.
- Do not let animals have any contact with the bandages, clothing, towels, sheets, etc. that have touched the vaccination site or the scab.
- Keep pets out of the room when you are changing bandages, clothes, towels, or sheets.
- Before allowing your pet back into the room after you have changed your bandage, handle and dispose of all contaminated materials safely:
 - Place used bandages and gauze in a plastic zipper bag before throwing them away. You should do the same with your scab when it falls off.
 - Cover trash containers tightly, and take them to an area that is inaccessible to pets and rodents.
 - Use normal laundering (hot water with bleach and detergent) to wash clothing, towels or sheets that have touched the vaccination site.
- Wash your hands after touching the vaccination site or other things that have touched the site, such as bandages or clothing.
- Wash your hands after touching the vaccination site and before touching anything else, including your eyes, skin, or pets.
- Before handling “pocket pets” such as guinea pigs, hamsters, and other rodents, make sure your vaccination site is bandaged and your hands are washed. Do not allow animals to crawl up your sleeve or have access to the skin area around your bandage.
- People who care for livestock should wear long-sleeved clothing and wash their hands before milking or having contact with the animals.

If your animal has any unusual symptoms and you think it could have been exposed to the vaccinia virus accidentally, call your local health office and your veterinarian.

For more information on smallpox and smallpox vaccine, visit our Web site at www.doh.wa.gov.