



INFORMATION ON LIVE VIRUS VACCINES AND VACCINIA

The vaccinia virus is the "live virus" used in the smallpox vaccine. It is a "pox"-type virus related to smallpox. When given to humans as a vaccine, it helps the body to develop immunity to smallpox. The smallpox vaccine does not contain the smallpox virus.

What is a "live virus" vaccine?

- ◆ A "live virus" vaccine is a vaccine that contains a "living" virus that is able to give and produce immunity, usually without causing illness.
- ◆ Because the virus in the vaccine is live, it can be transmitted to other parts of the body or to other people.
- ◆ For most people with healthy immune systems, live virus vaccines are effective and safe.
- ◆ Sometimes a person getting a live vaccine has mild symptoms of the virus in the vaccine.
- ◆ Other live virus vaccines used in the United States include measles, mumps, rubella, and chickenpox.

Facts about Vaccinia

- ◆ The vaccinia virus, the virus in the smallpox vaccine, is another "pox"-type virus.
- ◆ The vaccinia virus may cause rash, fever, and head and body aches. In certain groups of people, complications from the vaccinia virus can be severe.

Who Should **NOT** Get the Smallpox Vaccine?

- ◆ The smallpox vaccine is not recommended for people who have weakened immune systems, including people with leukemia or human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection or people undergoing treatment with certain drugs or with certain skin conditions. In rare cases, people who fall into these groups can have serious complications from the vaccine.
- ◆ Individuals in any of these groups, should *not* get the smallpox vaccine *unless* they are exposed to the smallpox virus.
- ◆ Individuals in close contact with people who fall into any of these groups should *not* get the smallpox *unless* they have been exposed to the smallpox virus.

For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/smallpox, or call the CDC public response hotline at (888) 246-2675 (English), (888) 246-2857 (Español), or (866) 874-2646 (TTY).

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