

PREVENTING CONTACT TRANSMISSION

Unlike other current immunizations, smallpox vaccination is characterized by a virus that propagates in the skin and can potentially contaminate the vaccinee's hands, or the skin and mucosal of others with whom the vaccinee comes into contact.

It is important to prevent dissemination of the vaccinia virus from the vaccination site to other parts of the vaccinee's body or to others.

General principles for the care of vaccinees and the protection of healthcare system employees and susceptible patients follow:

Healthcare Systems

Contact with vaccinees can pose a threat to:

- Unvaccinated health care workers
- Susceptible patients

Treat Contaminated Materials as Infectious Waste

Great care must be taken to keep all materials that might be contaminated separate from general areas:

LINENS TOWELS GOWNS INSTRUMENTS BP & MONITORING EQUIPMENT

These materials should be placed in an appropriate biohazard container and treated as **INFECTIOUS WASTE**.

Vaccinees

Advise vaccinees and/or guardians that until a scab has formed (14-21 days):

- Keep the vaccination site covered (*)
- Do not touch, scratch, or rub the vaccination site (#)
- Avoid person-to-person contact with unvaccinated individuals
- Avoid touching, rubbing, or otherwise performing any maneuvers that might transfer vaccinia virus to the eye or surrounding skin
- Discard the vaccination site covering carefully (^)
- After handling the vaccination site covering, thoroughly wash hands with soap and running water

* Sterile gauze (loosely taped) and semi-permeable occlusive dressing is recommended

A special problem because the site is usually itchy

^ The covering contains viable virus and can spread the infection to others. Carefully enclose the gauze in a plastic bag that can be sealed prior to placing it in a trash receptacle.