# Smallpox Disease and Transmission

| How do you get smallpox? | You can get smallpox by being exposed to the virus.  
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|  | • If you are in an area where the virus is used as a weapon.  
|  | • If you get near a person who is sick with smallpox and has the rash.  

| How is smallpox used as a bioterrorist weapon? | The smallpox virus can be stored and used as a weapon to make people sick.  
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|  | • If someone releases the virus, people nearby could be at risk.  

| How do I protect myself? | A vaccination can keep you from getting smallpox.  
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|  | • Stay at least 6 feet away from a person who is sick with smallpox.  
|  | • By not touching a sick person’s skin, clothing, sheets, or blanket.  

|  | You can’t get smallpox from some one else:  
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|  | • Before the rash in the mouth appears.  
|  | • After the scabs from the rash have fallen off.  

| If you think you have been exposed? | Call your doctor.  
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|  | Vaccination within 72 hours of contact can help reduce symptoms and disease.  

| Symptoms? | When someone gets smallpox:  
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|  | • For the first 7-17 days the person doesn’t feel sick.  
|  | • Then the person will have flu-like symptoms, with a high fever and severe backache. This may last 2-4 days.  
|  | • The person then gets a rash in the mouth and throat. Then the person is very contagious.  
|  | • The rash and sore spread to all part of the body.  
|  | • Eventually the sores turn into big pimples and then scab over.  

| Disease Development? | Smallpox is most easily passed to other during the first 10 days after the rash occurs.  

| Treatment? | There is no antibiotic treatment for smallpox, only supportive treatment.  
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|  | There is enough smallpox vaccine for everyone in the United States to get vaccinated, if needed.  
|  | At present, only health care, emergency response and military people are being vaccinated.  

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Adapted from The Department of Human Health Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention by San Bernardino County Department of Public Health, Preparedness & Response Program. 10/06.