



Smallpox (PUBLIC HANDOUT)

What is Smallpox?

Smallpox is an acute, contagious and sometimes fatal disease caused by the variola virus, and marked by fever and a unique growing skin rash.

What are the symptoms of Smallpox?

The symptoms of Smallpox begin with high fever, head and body aches, and sometimes vomiting. A rash follows that spreads and progresses to raised bumps and pus-filled blisters that crust, scab and fall off after about three weeks, leaving a pitted scar.

If someone comes in contact with Smallpox, how long does it take to show symptoms?

After exposure, it takes between 7 and 17 days for symptoms of Smallpox to appear (average incubation time is 12 to 14 days). During this time, the infected person feels fine and is not contagious.

Is Smallpox fatal?

The majority of patients with Smallpox recover, but death may occur in up to 30% of cases. Many Smallpox survivors have permanent scars over large areas of their body, especially their face. Some people are left blind.

How is Smallpox spread?

Smallpox normally spreads from contact with infected persons. Generally, direct and fairly prolonged face-to-face contact is required to spread Smallpox from one person to another. Smallpox also can be spread through direct contact with infected bodily fluids or contaminated objects such as bedding or clothing.

Is there any treatment for Smallpox?

Smallpox can be prevented through use of the Smallpox vaccine. There is no proven treatment for Smallpox, but research to evaluate new antiviral drugs is ongoing. Patients with Smallpox can benefit from supportive therapy (e.g., intravenous fluids, medicine to control fever or pain) and antibiotics for any secondary bacterial infections that may occur.

Where can I get more information on Smallpox?

- Your healthcare provider
 - Your local department of health
 - The New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services
- Website – www.nj.gov/health
DHSS Communicable Disease Service at (609) 588-7500

CUMBERLAND COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
309 Buck St.
Millville, NJ 08332



SALEM COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
98 Market Street
Salem, NJ 08079

www.cshealth.org

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- CDC

Website www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/Smallpox

1-800-CDC-INFO (4636) for assistance in English and Spanish

TTY 1-888-232-6348

E-mail: cdcinfo@cdc.gov