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Smallpox



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WHAT SMALLPOX IS

Smallpox is a highly infectious disease caused by a tiny germ known as a virus. It is characterized by headache, fever, and a breaking out all over the body. About 12 days after the virus enters the body of an unprotected person, the first symptoms appear.

HOW MUCH OF A DANGER IN THE U. S. ?

In spite of the fact that medical science has long possessed a safe and effective means of preventing smallpox (vaccination) failure to take advantage of this sure protection results in several thousand cases of the disease in the United States each year.

In States with laws requiring vaccination against smallpox as a condition for entering the schools, the disease has practically disappeared. In those States, which do not enforce such vaccination regulations, smallpox continues to be more prevalent.

The relative mildness of smallpox in the United States in recent years has encouraged an easing of the enforcement of vaccination requirements. If this attitude continues smallpox will again become a serious problem in this country.

Smallpox may strike at people of all ages, but is more often fatal to young children. It is most prevalent during the late winter months.

HOW SMALLPOX SPREADS

The virus that causes the disease lives in the skin eruption and in discharges from the nose and throat of a person suffering with smallpox. Since the virus lives but a short time outside the body, the disease is most often spread by direct personal contact with a recognized or unrecognized case.

FACTS ABOUT VACCINATION

Vaccination is a safe and simple procedure. A small amount of smallpox vaccine is painlessly introduced into the skin. In a few days, if the vaccination "takes," the spot where the vaccine was placed becomes red and slightly swollen and a vaccination eruption develops. The vaccinated area should be kept clean and dry until the scab falls off—18 to 20 days. No dressing should be applied to the vaccination.

The vaccine used by physicians is issued under license of the United States Public Health Service. This assures a high standard of purity.

Experience indicates that vaccination prevents an attack of smallpox for five to ten years, and in some instances for much longer.

WHEN TO VACCINATE

Infants should be vaccinated before they are 12 months of age.

A second vaccination is recommended for children at the time they enter school.

It is important, however, for all persons exposed to a known or suspected case of smallpox to be vaccinated *immediately* with fully potent vaccine. Only vaccine kept constantly below freezing until used can be trusted as fully potent.

If an individual still retains protection from a previous vaccination, only a slight local reaction is likely to follow a revaccination.

TREATMENT OF SMALLPOX

There is no specific treatment for smallpox. Measures taken by the physician will be for the purpose of making the patient more comfortable and to protect him against possible complications.

THE ONE PREVENTIVE

There is only one sure way to protect yourself against smallpox—*vaccination*.

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