



SMALLPOX FACT SHEET

People Who Should NOT Get the Smallpox Vaccine (Unless they are exposed to smallpox)

Some people are at greater risk for serious side effects from the smallpox vaccine. **Individuals who have any of the following conditions, or live with someone who does, should NOT get the smallpox vaccine unless they have been exposed to the smallpox virus:**

- Eczema or atopic dermatitis. (This is true even if the condition is not currently active, mild or experienced as a child.)
- Skin conditions such as burns, chickenpox, shingles, impetigo, herpes, severe acne, or psoriasis. (People with any of these conditions should not get the vaccine until they have completely healed.)
- Weakened immune system. (Cancer treatment, an organ transplant, HIV, some severe autoimmune disorders and medications to treat autoimmune disorders, and other illnesses can weaken the immune system.)
- Pregnancy or plans to become pregnant within one month of vaccination.

In addition, individuals should not get the smallpox vaccine if they:

- Are allergic to the vaccine or any of its ingredients.
- Are younger than 12 months of age. However, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) advises against non-emergency use of smallpox vaccine in children younger than 18 years of age. In addition, the vaccine manufacturer's package insert states that the vaccine is not recommended for use in geriatric populations in non-emergency situations. The term geriatric generally applies to those age 65 and above.
- Have a moderate or severe short-term illness. (These people should wait until they are completely recovered to get the vaccine.)
- Are currently breastfeeding.
- Are using steroid drops in their eyes. (These people should wait until they are no longer using the medication to get the vaccine.)

Again, people who have been directly exposed to the smallpox virus should get the vaccine, regardless of their health status.

Don't Hesitate!

If offered the smallpox vaccine, individuals should tell their immunization provider if they have any of the above conditions, or even if they suspect they might.

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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