

FACT SHEET – *Smallpox*

SMALLPOX IS A DISEASE

- A virus causes it.
- Only humans can get smallpox.
- Smallpox no longer occurs naturally in the world.
 - In 1980, it was eliminated from the world by vaccination.
 - If it occurs again, it would be because laboratory samples were deliberately spread.
- Smallpox and chickenpox are different.
 - Smallpox starts with a high fever.
 - Smallpox makes many sores on the palms of hands and soles of feet.
 - A doctor can easily tell the difference.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services
Frankfort, KY

<http://chfs.ky.gov/dph/preparedness>

Kentucky Regional Poison Center
Louisville, KY

EMERGENCY: 1-800-222-1222

<http://www.krpc.com>

Lake Cumberland District Health Dept.
(606) 678 – 4761

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
Atlanta, GA

Toll free: 1-800-311-3435

<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/smallpox>

SMALLPOX IS KNOWN BY THE RASH IT CAUSES

- About two weeks after getting the virus, a person gets a high fever and feels very sick.
- Two to three days after the fever starts
 - small, colored bumps appear in the throat
 - rash spreads to the chest, back, and legs
- The rash changes over the next two weeks as
 - bumps become round, hard blisters
 - pimples scab over
 - scabs fall off
- Smallpox spreads mostly from person to person.
 - People can only spread the disease when she/he has the rash.
 - Usually, it requires close personal contact for hours to pass the disease.
 - Once the scabs fall off the pox, a person can no longer spread the disease.
- The smallpox virus is easily killed outside the body.
 - It will die if exposed to sunlight for a short time.
 - Most household cleaners (bleach) will kill it.

FACT SHEET – *Smallpox (continued)*

THE DISEASE AND ITS SPREAD CAN BE PREVENTED

- There is a vaccine that protects people.
 - It prevents or lessens the disease if given up to four days after exposure.
 - If smallpox occurs again, people vaccinated years ago should be vaccinated again.
 - There is vaccine for everyone in the United States.
- Once symptoms start
 - there is no cure
 - for every three people who get sick with smallpox, about one will die from it
 - people are treated for the symptoms they have (“supportive care”)
- Vaccination, isolation, and quarantine prevent the spread of smallpox.
 - People exposed to the virus are vaccinated.
 - People who have the disease are “isolated” from those who don’t in hospital rooms or other places that keep germs from spreading.
 - People who might have the disease but are not showing it yet are “quarantined.”
 - They are kept from coming in close contact with other people.
 - This might be done at a hospital or at home.