

Vaccinia Virus

Hazards: Vaccinia Virus is the virus used in the smallpox vaccine. In humans, vaccination may be accompanied by fever, rash, fatigue, swelling of the lymph nodes, and headache. Because of the way the vaccine is administered in humans, a small wound appears at the site of inoculation that then forms a scab. Normally, no serious health effects occur in healthy adults. However, immunocompromised individuals and people with skin conditions like eczema may be at risk for more serious symptoms.

Risks: Transmission might occur through direct contact with a recently infected animal. The greatest risk of exposure may occur during cage changes when there is contact with infected animals.

Precautions: Wear PPE during cage changes. Use a biosafety cabinet during cage changes. Follow ABSL-2 procedures for bedding disposal and cage autoclaving before equipment goes to cage wash. Wash hands after work.

Emergency Response: In the event of an accidental skin exposure, wash the affected area with soap and water for 15 minutes, tell your supervisor, and report to Occupational Medicine. If it is a splash into eye or mouth, flush with water for 15 minutes, tell your supervisor, and report to Occupational Medicine. If you are working in this area and develop symptoms, tell your supervisor and report to Occupational Medicine. Potential exposures and illnesses must be reported to EHRS by your supervisor or manager.

Preventative vaccine: A new safer human vaccine is available to researchers and animal care personnel called Jynneos. This vaccine does not have the same risks as the historical smallpox vaccine. Two doses of the vaccine are given one-month apart as a subcutaneous injection. You can discuss getting this vaccine with Occupational Medicine.