

Smallpox Vaccine Information for Animal Owners

With the potential for thousands, if not millions, of people in Texas to be vaccinated against the smallpox virus, public concern has arisen regarding the potential for recently vaccinated persons to transmit the vaccine virus, vaccinia, to their pets or livestock. Although a variety of wild and domestic animals are susceptible to infection with vaccinia virus, proper care of the vaccination site by the vaccinee should be sufficient for preventing secondary transmission to domestic animals. In order to minimize the risk of transmission to animals, the Texas Department of Health offers these recommendations for recent vaccinees to follow until a scab has formed at the vaccination site.

- Keep the vaccination site covered with loosely taped sterile gauze or other dressing as directed by your physician.
- Do not touch, scratch or rub the vaccination site.
- Discard the vaccination site covering carefully (enclose in a sealed plastic bag and discard in the trash).
- After touching the vaccination site or handling the vaccination site covering, thoroughly wash hands with soap and running water.
- Do not allow your pet to lick or otherwise come into direct contact with the vaccination site, discarded site coverings, or other objects that may have come into contact with the vaccination site.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has developed recommendations for vaccination site care to minimize the potential for secondary transmission of the vaccinia virus between recent vaccinees and their human contacts. These recommendations can be viewed at www.bt.cdc.gov/training/smallpoxvaccine/reactions/prevent.html.