

Insert agency name

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(Insert date)

For information, contact:
(Insert contact information)

Headline

(Insert information about the event)

Local authorities believe that people who were at (insert location) on (insert date and time) may have been exposed to smallpox. Public Health and other local authorities are investigating this incident.

Smallpox is a serious, contagious, and sometimes fatal infectious disease. There is no specific treatment for smallpox disease, and the only prevention is vaccination. The name *smallpox* is derived from the Latin word for “spotted” and refers to the raised bumps that appear on the face and body of an infected person.

The first symptoms of smallpox include fever, malaise, head and body aches and sometimes vomiting. The fever is usually high, in the range of 101 to 104 degrees Fahrenheit. At this time, people are usually too sick to carry on their normal activities. This phase may last for 2 to 4 days. Soon a rash will emerge in the mouth and then on other parts of the body. The person is most contagious at this time. The sores will eventually scab over and fall off leaving a scar.

Generally, direct and fairly prolonged face-to-face contact is required to spread smallpox from one person to another. Smallpox also can be spread through direct contact with infected bodily fluids or contaminated objects such as bedding or clothing. Rarely, smallpox has been spread by virus carried in the air in enclosed settings such as buildings, buses and trains.

There is no treatment for smallpox, but there is a vaccine that helps the body develop immunity to the disease.

If you believe you have been exposed, or if you have any of the symptoms associated with smallpox, please see a healthcare provider immediately.

Public Health may open a mass medication dispensing site. That will be determined in the coming days, and the public will be informed as soon as that decision is made. Please stay tuned to local radio and TV stations for more information.