

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS IN THE TREATMENT OF PATIENT RECENTLY IMMUNIZED AGAINST SMALLPOX



Small pox immunization is accomplished by inoculating the skin with a live strain of a similar virus called vaccinia. In general, it is a safe and effective means of preventing smallpox. However, this technique and the use of a live vaccine produces an active wound which contact with can transmit vaccinia. For most people, exposure to vaccinia would only be a potential minor problem, but, for patients who are immunosuppressed, have chronic skin conditions, or are pregnant, exposure to vaccinia can result in serious consequences. Therefore, simple precautions should be taken in treating patients who have been recently immunized against smallpox and still have the small healing wound associated with that process.



1. Follow universal precautions.
2. Leave already present bandages in place.
3. Avoid direct contact with the wound.
4. If rebandaging of an immunization site is required, tape two layers of dry gauze over the wound.
5. Should contact with an open immunization site occur, immediately cleanse the area with warm water and soap or with an alcohol hand rub.
6. Keep clothing that comes in contact with a vaccination site separate from other items and launder in hot water with detergent and/or bleach.
7. Direct exposure to a wound should be reported in accordance with existing guidelines regarding exposure to infectious diseases.