

Smallpox

What is Smallpox?

Smallpox is an acute, contagious viral disease caused by the Variola virus

The disease was eradicated worldwide through aggressive vaccination campaigns, though smallpox can be used as a bioterrorism agent.

Signs and Symptoms

The incubation period can last from 7-19 days, normally lasting 10-14 days. During the incubation period, the person is not contagious.

Initial symptoms include:

- High fever
- Headache
- Body aches
- Vomiting

During this stage, the person is sometimes contagious

Rash Stage: the person is most contagious at the beginning of this stage

- Rash – spreads and progresses to raised bumps and pus-filled blisters that crust, scab and fall off after 3 weeks

Transmission (How it spreads)

Direct contact with infected body fluids or contaminated objects

Direct and prolonged exposure to a sick person with smallpox

Smallpox has been observed as being spread via airborne transmission in enclosed settings

Diagnosis and Treatment

Patient history and physical examination typically lead to a diagnosis

Antivirals are available for treatment

Prevention:

The smallpox vaccine is available to certain high risk groups. If a widespread outbreak were to occur, vaccine is available and can be administered within 7 days of exposure

If you have symptoms, call your healthcare provider

Report cases to the Riley County Health Department by calling the Disease Investigation Line: 785-317-0474

Smallpox is a reportable disease in the state of Kansas. All cases must be reported to KDHE via the Epi Hotline: 877-427-7317