



## Policy 4.95 Smallpox Vaccinations

**Responsible Official:** VP for Human Resources

**Administering Division/Department:** Health and Safety

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### Overview

Out of concern for the welfare of the general public, this policy provides precautionary guidelines for the mandatory smallpox vaccinations of employees involved in research projects investigating vaccine and related viruses, and certain healthcare workers who may be called upon to care for individuals who become infected with smallpox or the vaccinia virus. These guidelines also apply to employees who receive the smallpox vaccine from military sources.

### Policy Details

#### GUIDELINES

Emory University employees required to receive smallpox vaccinations, even if the vaccine will be given by sources other than Emory, must notify the Infection Control Department (404-712-7156 at EUH or 404-686-2351 at CLH) prior to the vaccination.

- A vaccinated employee will be precluded from working with immunocompromised (i.e. Transplant, AIDS, Neutropenic or ICU patients) or other individuals at risk of severe infection with vaccinia from the time of the vaccination until the time that the vaccine scab has separated (typically 17-19 days).
- A vaccinated employee must keep the vaccination site covered with gauze dressing until the scab separates, wear long sleeves and wash his/her hands often.
- Employees are to notify Employee Health Services immediately after receiving the vaccine, (EUH) 404-686-8589 or (CLH) 404-686-2537. Designated staff or Employee Health Services staff will assess workers upon notification of the receipt of the vaccine and, as indicated, until the scab separates.
- Employees required by Emory or by the United States government to be vaccinated and who subsequently suffer an adverse reaction causing the employee to be off from work will be placed on leave-with-pay if Infection Control determines they must be off from work.
- Employees who make a personal decision to be vaccinated and suffer an adverse reaction causing them to be off from work must use accrued sick leave.

#### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

##### 1. What is the smallpox vaccine?

The smallpox vaccine is the only way to prevent smallpox. The vaccine is made from a virus called *vaccinia*, which is another "pox"-type virus related to smallpox but cannot cause smallpox. The vaccine helps the body develop immunity to smallpox.

##### 2. Is it possible for people to get smallpox from the vaccination?

No. The smallpox vaccine does not contain smallpox virus and cannot spread or cause smallpox. However, the vaccine does contain the virus *vaccinia*, which is live in the vaccine. Because the virus is live, it can spread to other

parts of the body or to other people from the vaccine site. This can be prevented through proper care of the vaccination site (e.g., hand-washing and careful disposal of used bandages).

**3. Is it possible to get vaccinia, the virus in the vaccine, from someone who has recently been vaccinated?**

Yes. Vaccinia is spread by touching a vaccination site before it has healed or by touching bandages or clothing that has become contaminated with live virus from the vaccination site. Vaccinia is not spread through airborne contagion. The vaccinia virus may cause rash, fever, and head and body aches.

**4. If I am required to have a vaccination, to whom do I report this and when?**

Prior to the required vaccination, Emory Healthcare employees must report the requirement for the vaccination to the Infection Control Department at either (EUH) 404-712-7156 or (CLH) 404-686-2351; University or Emory Clinic employees must report the requirement to the Infection Control Department at EUH. Immediately after receiving the vaccine, employees must contact Employee Health Services at (EUH) 404-686-8589 or (CLH ) 404-686-2537.

**5. If Emory or the U.S. government requires me to have a smallpox vaccination, am I required to use my sick leave if I have to be off from work due to reactions to the vaccination?**

If Infection Control determines that the vaccination has caused the employee to be off from work due to an adverse reaction to the vaccination, the employee will be placed on leave-with-pay until Infection Control releases the employee to return to work. However, if the employee made a personal decision to be vaccinated, and must be off from work due to an adverse reaction, the employee must use his/her accrued sick leave.

**6. What type of health conditions should not be in close contact, i.e., workplace or home with someone who has been vaccinated?**

Anyone with a diagnosis of eczema or atopic dermatitis, a weakened immune system or pregnancy should avoid close physical contact with someone who has been vaccinated.

For additional information please reference the other policies in this section; Human Resources Policies and Procedures Manual, Section XI, Health & Safety.

**Related Links**

- Current Version of This Policy: <http://policies.emory.edu/4.95>

**Revision History**

**No previous versions of this policy were found.**

*Emory University policies are subject to change at any time. If you are reading this policy in paper or PDF format, you are strongly encouraged to visit [policies.emory.edu](http://policies.emory.edu) to ensure that you are relying on the current version.*