

## Smallpox – Home Care Instructions

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The following is recommended when providing care at home to a person diagnosed with smallpox.

- The person diagnosed with smallpox should not leave the home.
- Listen closely to the local radio or television for special instructions.
- Advise friends and relatives not to visit.
- Wear a mask over your nose and mouth when you are within 6 feet of the infected person. (Masks will be provided by hospital or public health department personnel.)
- Wash your hands with soap and water before you eat or drink, after using the bathroom and after contact with the sick person.
- Wash the sick person's hands after using the bathroom, and before eating or drinking
- Wear gloves (vinyl or latex) when you have contact with the sick person's skin, blood, and other body fluids (urine, feces, vomit, drainage, mucous, or saliva). Wash your hands after removing the gloves. If gloves are not available, wash your hands with soap and water after contact with the sick person's skin, blood, urine, feces, vomit, wound drainage, mucous or saliva.
- If the sick person is having trouble breathing call 911.
- Take the sick person's temperature at least twice a day. If the temperature goes above 100° F, give Tylenol® (if not allergic) or other medicine such as Motrin® or Advil®. Follow the instructions on the package insert. If the temperature is not controlled by the medicine, call your health care provider (doctor or nurse) for further instructions.
- Give the sick person plenty of fluids such as water or juice. Allow him/her to eat solid food as tolerated.
- Change the sick person's clothes and bed linens frequently especially if soiled with blood or other body fluids.
- Wash soiled clothes and bed linens in hot water and bleach using standard proportions as recommended by the manufacturer. Do not shake linens/laundry prior to placing in washer.
- Disinfect the bathroom and kitchen with a disinfectant such as Lysol® everyday or when surfaces become soiled with blood or other body fluids.
- As a caregiver, you must take care of yourself. Get plenty of rest, drink fluids frequently, and eat a healthy diet. Take your temperature in the morning and afternoon for 3 weeks. If you develop a fever above 100°F or if you have flu-like symptoms immediately call your doctor or call your local public health Smallpox hotline if such a hotline is created as announced on local radio or television.

Reference: Cahill, Christine K., MS, RN, CIC, Infection Control Consultant, California Department of Health Services. Licensing & Certification Program. [California Hospital Bioterrorism Response Planning Guide](#).