

The Association of periOperative Registered Nurses (AORN) has issued an advisory related to the smallpox vaccination. This can be found at [www.aorn.org](http://www.aorn.org) under “What’s New.”

Association of periOperative Registered Nurses (AORN) Smallpox Vaccination Advisory  
January 28, 2003

Phase I of the national smallpox vaccination program was activated on January 24, 2003. The issue regarding provider-to-patient transmission of the virus after vaccination is of particular concern to perioperative nurses. The primary question is whether newly vaccinated personnel should provide direct patient care in the OR; if not, for what period of time following vaccination should they be restricted from providing direct care? The AORN "Recommended Practices for Standard and Transmission-Based Precautions in the Perioperative Practice Setting" state that "Personnel who have exudative lesions or weeping dermatitis should refrain from providing direct patient care or handling medical devices used in performing invasive procedures". Because the current vaccine is a live virus, and the vaccinated site is an open draining wound during the first week following vaccination, AORN believes that vaccinated personnel should be restricted from providing direct patient care or handling medical devices used in performing invasive procedures until a scab has formed over the vaccination site. Refer to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention web site for further information on small pox vaccination. AORN will continue to closely monitor further developments and will provide further advisories as new information becomes available.

(Prepared by the AORN Disaster Preparedness Task Force and approved by the AORN Board of Directors, January 28, 2003).

1. "Recommended Practices for Standard and Transmission-Based Precautions in the Perioperative Practice Setting", in Standards, Recommended Practices, and Guidelines (Denver: AORN, Inc, 2002) 322.

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