Herpesvirus Simiae (B-Virus Infection)
University Health Services

B-virus is a member of the herpes group of viruses that occurs naturally in Macaque and other Old World monkeys. Infection with B-virus produces very mild disease in the monkey. Some monkeys may have small blisters (vesicles) which progress to ulcers in the mouth, on the face, lips, or genitals and/or eye infections. These lesions heal after a few days, but the virus remains permanently in the monkey. The virus may become active and cause lesions periodically. These relapses more likely occur when the monkey has stress. During these periods, the monkey sheds the virus. The virus, however, may also be shed when the monkey does not have visible lesions or symptoms.

In humans, herpes B virus can cause serious health problems if not treated soon after exposure. Infection is caused by animal bites or scratches, or indirect contact, such as contact with a contaminated needle.

Who I at risk for infection with B-virus?

Individuals at risk include:

- Animal caretakers or Veterinarians
- Laboratory personnel or anyone who is exposed to monkeys or monkey tissues.
- Persons who have weak immune systems because of medicines or underlying medical conditions.
**Signs of B-Virus Infection in Humans**

B-virus related disease has a variety of signs and symptoms which generally occur within one month of exposure. These include:

- Small blister or skin lesions at or near the site of injury
- Pain, numbness, or itching near the wound
- Feel like you have the flu, with general body aches and pain
- Fever and chills
- Headaches lasting more than 24 hours
- Fatigue or tiredness
- Problems with muscle coordination, including balance or walking
- Shortness of breath

**Can there be serious complications from B-virus infection?**

Of the reported cases, some infected individuals developed encephalitis or problems with their central nervous system. For some patients, serious problems can lead to death. Antiviral medicine treatment is often used from time of exposure to prevent and/or control infection.

**How to Protect Yourself from Infection**

Use workplace safety practices to reduce the chances of infection. When you are working with non-human primates:

- Take precautions at all times. Use restraints that will reduce the chance of bites and scratches.

- Wear appropriate, protective clothing. This may include a lab coat, gloves and a face shield. Face shield are important to avoid animal mucus.

- Work together, with at least one other person, when handling primates. Minimize direct handling.

- Report any observed facial, lip, or mouth lesions in primates to a staff veterinarian.
☐ Immediately report bite or scratch injuries involving a Macaque monkey or scratches from cages or equipment that might be contaminated with their excretions.

☐ Go to University Health Services, McCampbell Hall, 2\textsuperscript{nd} Floor or call (614) 293-8146 for immediate treatment.

  - If the injury occurs when University Health Services is closed, first aid should be given at the worksite or at the University Hospital or University Hospital East Emergency Departments. First aid given at either location should follow the wound care instructions posted in your work area.

**For More Information or to Get Treatment**

If there has been an injury involving a Macaque or equipment contaminated with their excretions or tissues:

- Call University Health Services right away at (614) 293-8146. Or go to the 2\textsuperscript{nd} Floor of McCampbell Hall for a visit.

- If University Health Services is closed, get first aid treatment right away at University Hospital or University Hospital East Emergency Departments.

☐ Talk to your doctor or others on your health care team if you have any questions. You may request more written information from the Library for Health Information at (614) 293-3707 or email: health-info@osu.edu.