



Name:
Smallpox virus
Variola

Family:
Poxviridae

Class:
Group I dsDNA
Enveloped

Genome:
~186,000 bases, ~200 proteins

Mode of transmission:
Airborne (direct contact)



Biology & Disease

Smallpox is a highly contagious and deadly infectious disease caused by one of two virus strains: Variola major and Variola minor that differ greatly in their mortality rates.

Infection with Smallpox occurs in small blood vessels of the skin, the mouth and the throat. In the skin, the infection first manifests as a rash which then turns into the well characterized blisters of Smallpox. This virus has a special place in human history, not only for the devastation it inflicted upon the human race for several decades but also for being the first disease to be completely eradicated by vaccination.