

## 5. Vaccine reactions

Ironically, sometimes medicine is the source of illness. Vaccines, designed to protect health, may instead cause adverse reactions.

### VAERS: Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System

VAERS is a national surveillance program co-sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and the Food and Drug Administration. VAERS collects and analyzes information from reports of adverse events following immunization.

By monitoring reactions, VAERS helps identify new safety concerns about immunizations, ensuring that the benefits of vaccines continue to be far greater than the risks.

#### Reporting by paper form

If you need to report a vaccine reaction, you can fill out the one-page paper form. Folding the form in thirds will turn it into a postage-paid mailer to send to VAERS headquarters in Rockville, Maryland.

#### Reporting online at [www.vaers.org](http://www.vaers.org)

You can also report directly through the Internet. Click the "web reporting" link on the VAERS home page. To save time, record your entries on a scratch form before opening the online form.

### Smallpox vaccination reactions

With growing concern about terrorist attack using bioweapons, the federal government is starting to immunize first responders against smallpox.

The CDC has prepared a Smallpox Fact Sheet that lists various adverse reactions to the vaccine. We have reprinted this factsheet later in this section.

When reporting to VAERS, you have a choice: you can go online (screenshot above) or mail-in the traditional form (thumbnail below, actual size next page).