

The story of Edward Jenner and Smallpox Vaccination

Narrator	In the 18 <sup>th</sup> century there were many killer diseases and one of the worst was smallpox.
Smallpox sufferer	I have got a terrible rash of pus-filled spots all over my body and it is very itchy!
Narrator	What's more, he may well die as the survival rate is about 66%. If he survives he'll have terrible scars.
Smallpox sufferer	Is there anything that can be done to stop others catching this horrible disease?
(enter Jenner) Jenner	My name is Edward Jenner. I am a country doctor and I've noticed something quite interesting.
Smallpox sufferer	What is it?
(enter milkmaid Sarah, with cow) Jenner	Milkmaids around here don't seem to catch smallpox, like young Sarah here.
Milkmaid	Milking cows is really hard work, and what's more, I've caught cowpox from my favourite cow, Blossom. Just look at my hands!
Jenner	You are right, but I think the cowpox is why you haven't caught smallpox.
Smallpox sufferer	Hey, that's handy!
(enter boy, James) Jenner	I think I'm going to try a little experiment. Have you had smallpox, James?
James	No, sir, I've been fine.
Jenner	I'm going to take some pus from Sarah's spot here... and put it into your arm... like this.

The story of Edward Jenner and Smallpox Vaccination

Milkmaid	Why would you do that? Surely he'll catch cowpox now?
Jenner	Maybe, but I think it will protect James from smallpox.
James	Cheers! Are you making me a guinea pig?
Narrator	Jenner was sure the cowpox pus would protect James. He repeated the transfer of pus from milkmaid Sarah several times and then he was ready to try infecting him with smallpox.
Jenner	(to smallpox sufferer) If I take a little pus from you now... and put it into James' arm ...
Smallpox sufferer	Won't this give James smallpox?
Jenner	No, I don't think it will.
Narrator	Several weeks later James was still absolutely fine.
James	I haven't caught smallpox! Mr.Jenner, you are a genius!
Milkmaid	I think it's Blossom here who is the genius. She gave me the cowpox
Jenner	A good point - I will call this pus a "vaccine" after Blossom.
James	Oh, yes. I've just been taught that "vacca" means "cow" in my Latin lessons.
Narrator	This is how vaccination against disease began and nearly 200 years later, smallpox was finally eradicated from the world.