

Study may help prevent bioterrorism

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U.S. scientists say they've shown a protein in the nucleus of smallpox victims' cells triggers progression of smallpox-related illnesses.

The Purdue University researchers say their landmark finding might help prevent the use of such viruses as bioterrorism weapons.

The researchers found that poxviruses move to the second and third stages of development by recruiting a protein, called TATA-binding protein, in the nucleus of mammals' cells.

"This protein is required for activation of the middle- and late-stage poxvirus genes," said Steven Broyles, a Purdue biochemistry professor. "In the past, we were just groping around. We now have a model for how the poxvirus growth process is orchestrated."

The research is published in the current issue of the Journal of Virology.

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