

# Poxviruses and the diseases they cause



The poxvirus family is a diverse and interesting group of viruses causing a variety of different diseases in a large number of different animals, including humans.

**Squirrels are not alone!**

## Myxomatosis



Myxomatosis is a devastating disease of rabbits. In its natural host, the South American rabbit, the poxvirus causes a relatively mild disease. However the European rabbit is much more severely affected and usually dies. The virus has been deliberately introduced into wild populations of rabbits as a method of controlling numbers.

## Smallpox

Smallpox first appeared in the Far East over 2000 years ago and is one of the most devastating diseases known to man. After successful vaccination campaigns throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, in 1980, the World Health Organisation confirmed that smallpox had been eradicated.



## Orf



Orf causes scabby lesions on the lips and nostrils of sheep and goats throughout the world but humans can also become infected, resulting in painful swollen red ulcers.

Scientists at Moredun are a leading force in research into this disease.

### Did you know?

Despite its name, Chickenpox is not actually caused by a pox virus.

### Did you know?

Orf virus can survive in the environment for months or even years.

### Did you know?

Smallpox has a number of famous sufferers including Mary Queen of Scots and Mozart.