

Edward Jenner and the smallpox vaccine

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Read Edward Jenner's biography and complete the table in note form. Then, use the information from the fact file to talk about Jenner's life.

Edward Jenner was born in Berkeley, Gloucestershire, on 17th May 1749, son of a local vicar. At 14, he was apprentice to a local surgeon and then trained in London. In 1772, he returned to Berkeley and spent most of his life as a doctor. In 1796, he carried out his now famous experiment on eight-year-old James Phipps. Jenner inserted pus taken from a cowpox pustule into an incision on the boy's arm. He was testing his theory that milkmaids who suffered the mild disease of cowpox never contracted smallpox. Jenner then proved that having been inoculated with cowpox, Phipps was immune to smallpox. He submitted a paper to the Royal Society in 1797 describing his experiment, but was

told that his ideas were too revolutionary and that he needed more proof. So, Jenner experimented on several other children, including his own eleven-month-old son. In 1798, the results were finally published and Jenner coined the word vaccine from the Latin *vacca* for cow.

Jenner was widely ridiculed, but vaccination soon became widespread and Jenner became famous and spent much of his time researching and advising on developments of his vaccine. Jenner carried out research in a number of other areas of medicine and was also interested in fossil collecting and horticulture. He died on 26 January 1823.

Adapted from: http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures

Edward Jenner's fact file

Name:	Famous for:
Surname:	Other fields of interest:
Nationality:	Main events:
Place of birth:	1796: first experiment
Date of birth:	1797:
Father's job:	1798:
Job:	
Died:	