

WHAT ABOUT PREGNANCY?

If a woman has had chickenpox at some time in her life, there is no need for concern if she is exposed to chickenpox or shingles while she is pregnant. Her body has already developed immunity against varicella that will protect her and her baby. If she doesn't remember ever having chickenpox, she should see her doctor immediately after she knows she's been exposed for possible testing and treatment. The American Academy of Pediatrics states that "pregnancy in a mother or other household member is not felt to be a reason to avoid giving a child a varicella vaccination." Vaccination of students then should pose no threat to pregnant teachers.



OHIO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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ODH No. 9821.11 (9/10)

CHICKENPOX:

IT'S MORE SERIOUS THAN YOU THINK

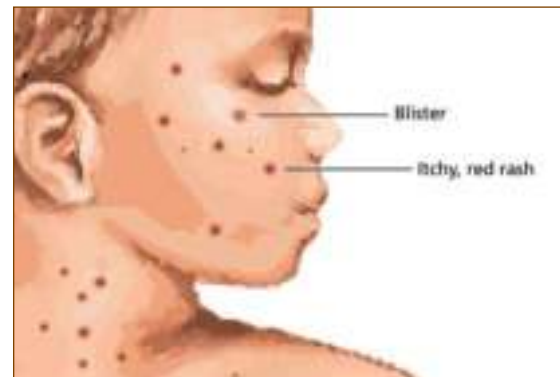


 OHIO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

CHICKENPOX FACTS

Chickenpox is an infectious disease caused by a virus that results in an itchy, blister-like rash, tiredness and fever. Chickenpox spreads from person to person through the air or by direct contact with an infected person's coughing or sneezing. Prior to the vaccine, an estimated 4 million cases of chickenpox occurred every year, resulting in 11,000 hospitalizations and 100 deaths.

Chickenpox (varicella) is usually mild, but it may be severe in some infants, adolescents and adults. Some people who get chickenpox may also suffer from complications such as dehydration, pneumonia, severe bacterial skin infections and infections of the brain (meningitis or encephalitis). In addition, only persons who have had chickenpox in the past can get shingles. Shingles is a painful



inflammation of the nerves that is caused by the chickenpox virus. About 500,000 cases of shingles occur each year.

WHO SHOULD GET THE VACCINE?

Many people need to be vaccinated. Children over the age of 12 months who have not had chickenpox should get vaccinated. Children will need to receive a second dose before entering school. This includes teenagers who may now need their first and second doses. Adults who have not had chickenpox should also be vaccinated, especially women of childbearing age. A vaccine for shingles is now available for people 60 years old or older. Consult your healthcare provider regarding your need for vaccination.

HOW SAFE IS THE VACCINE?

Studies have shown chickenpox vaccine to be safe and effective. The vaccine has been used since the early 1970s in many areas of the world and studied in the United States since the 1980s. It was licensed for use in the United States in 1995. The American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Academy of Family Physicians and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention all recommend chickenpox vaccine.

ARE THERE VACCINE SIDE EFFECTS?

The most common side effects are mild and may include pain and redness at the injection site. Fever and fussiness may also occur. A rash may develop at the site where the shot was given. More serious side effects are rare. Consult your health care provider.

VACCINE EFFECTIVENESS

The vaccine prevents chickenpox in about 80 to 90 percent of the people who get the shot. However, a few people who receive the vaccine will also get disease (breakthrough varicella),



when exposed to chickenpox. A person with 'breakthrough varicella' will have a very mild form of chickenpox; they will be less likely to have a fever, will have fewer spots and will recover faster.

CAN A VACCINATED PERSON WHO DEVELOPS BREAKTHROUGH VARICELLA STILL SPREAD THE DISEASE?

Yes. Vaccinated persons who get this milder form of chickenpox may still spread the disease to others who are not protected. Therefore, these individuals should stay at home until the blisters have formed scabs or if there are no blisters present, until no new spots or bumps are forming.