

Dear Parents:

Your child's school/childcare, (insert name), has recently reported several cases of chickenpox. Chickenpox, also known as varicella, is a very contagious disease caused by a virus. Below you will find information about the disease and what you should do if your child becomes sick.

- **Who gets Chickenpox?** This virus usually infects children. Older children and adults can also become infected if they haven't already had chickenpox (or been vaccinated against it).
- **My child received the varicella vaccine, can they still get chickenpox?** Yes, this is called "breakthrough chickenpox". The vaccine your child received is 70-90% effective against preventing severe chickenpox. "Breakthrough chickenpox" that develops in a vaccinated person is usually mild and does not last as long.
- **What if my child has never had chickenpox disease or the varicella vaccine?** Your child should be vaccinated.
- **Is it is safe to vaccinate my child after exposure to chickenpox disease?** Yes, this may help prevent the disease or result in a milder case of chickenpox. Vaccinations for your child are offered at medical clinics (your child's regular doctor) or at your local public health agency.
- **How is the virus spread?** Chickenpox is easily spread through the air by sneezing and coughing or through contact with someone's chickenpox rash. Your child may become sick anytime up to 2 weeks after coming in contact with someone with chickenpox.
- **What are the symptoms?** In unvaccinated children early symptoms may include aching, fever, sore throat, upper respiratory infection, poor appetite, headache, and tiredness for 1-2 days before the appearance of the rash. If your child has been vaccinated symptoms may include a mild fever and rash. The rash may look red like a bug bite but not have a blister. Please remember even though your child was vaccinated if they develop a rash they can spread it to others.
- **How long does my child need to stay out of school/child care?** Chickenpox is spread several days before the rash appears. Your child should be kept home until all of the rash is crusted over or faded away and no new rash appears for a 24-hour period.
- **Who do I tell if my child has chickenpox?** Please let the school/child care know if your child is out due to chickenpox.

If you have any concerns about your child's health please contact your healthcare provider.

Please feel free to contact our office at (insert phone number here) with any questions and concerns!

School/Childcare:

Public health: