

April 09, 2015

Notice to Staff and Parents.

Chickenpox has been seen in some elementary school aged children in the Anglophone West School District.

Who can develop chickenpox infection?

People who had chickenpox infection or who have received chickenpox vaccine are usually immune to the disease. Most children born between 2000-08 have received at least one dose of chickenpox vaccine according to the New Brunswick childhood immunization schedule.

The chickenpox vaccine can protect those who have not had chicken pox infection or been immunized against the virus. If the vaccine is given within 5 days of exposure to chickenpox, the vaccine can prevent or reduce the severity of disease.

Who can receive the publicly funded chickenpox vaccine?

You can check your child's immunization card, or with your health care provider, or the public health office to learn your child's immunization status. Please look for the words "varicella" or "VARIVAX®" or "PRIORIX-TETRA®" on their immunization card to find out if they received chickenpox vaccine.

Children born before the year 2000 are not eligible for publicly-funded chicken pox vaccine. Chicken pox disease becomes more severe with older age. If your child has never had chicken pox, you can speak to your health care provider about whether you should buy the vaccine for your child. Those aged 13 years and older should receive two doses of chickenpox vaccine at least 6 weeks apart.

Children born between 2000 and 2009 are eligible for one dose of publicly-funded chicken pox vaccine. In some cases, the chickenpox vaccine was added to the routine immunization schedule after your child had most of their vaccines. Your health care provider can write a prescription if you wish your child to have a second dose and you are willing to cover the cost.

Children born in the year 2009 or later are eligible for two doses of publicly funded vaccine.

What to do if your child becomes sick with chickenpox

Any staff or child who develops symptoms of fever and a rash should stay home from school until they are feeling better. Occasionally, those who have had one dose of chickenpox vaccine can develop mild chickenpox. People who had one dose of chickenpox vaccine and develop a fever and a rash should stay home from school until they feel well.

Those at higher risk of chicken pox complications

Most healthy people recover from this infection without long term effects. Chickenpox can become serious in people with certain medical conditions. People who are pregnant, or have diseases or medications that compromise the immune system can contact the Public Health Office at 453-5200 for more information.

Sincerely,

Na-Koshie Lamptey MD MPH CCFP FRCP(C)

Médecin Hygiéniste Régional (central), Bureau du médecin-hygiéniste en chef