

CHICKEN POX (VARICELLA)

DATE OF EXPOSURE: _____

NOTICE TO PARENTS

Your child may have been exposed to Chickenpox. Description of this illness follows. If your child develops any of the signs or symptoms below, please consult your child's doctor and notify your child's school. Children who have been vaccinated may develop a milder form of the disease.

School policy excludes children from school until all lesions are scabbed over.

Aspirin should NOT be given to children with because it is associated with Reye's Syndrome. Acetaminophen-containing medicines (like Tylenol) are recommended.

CAUSATIVE AGENT: The varicella-zoster virus is a member of the herpes virus family.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS: Chickenpox causes a rash that starts on the chest, back, stomach, and face and then spreads down the arms and legs, sometimes reaching the hands and feet. If the child has been vaccinated the rash may present in a different pattern. The rash consists of small pink bumps, some of which turn into round, hard shiny blisters that look like drops of water on the skin. Within 24 hrs, the blisters will begin to scab over. The rash is very itchy. Children with Chickenpox usually have a low to moderate fever and may not feel ill..

INCUBATION PERIOD: Approximately 2 weeks, may be 10 – 21 days.

COMMUNICABILITY: Chickenpox is contagious 1-2 days before the rash appears and then until all the lesions have formed scabs (this usually takes 7 days).

METHOD OF

TRANSMISSION: Airborne through coughing, sneezing, and by direct skin contact with fluid from the lesions. It is extremely difficult to prevent the spread of chickenpox, because children are contagious before they have any signs of illness. A vaccine is available, which, if given within 3-5 days of exposure MAY prevent infection. Children may also receive the Chickenpox vaccine (varivax) as part of their routine immunizations. Immunocompromised children without a history of chickenpox may be given a special preparation called VZIG, which give temporary protection after exposure.

For more information, contact your health care provider, your School Nurse, the Marin County Health Department or [http:// www.cdc.gov/nip/diseases/varicella](http://www.cdc.gov/nip/diseases/varicella)