



Date: 3/29/23

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Your child may have been exposed to varicella (chickenpox) at STUYVESANT HS.

Varicella, also known as chickenpox, is a contagious viral infection that causes a rash. The rash can be itchy and may include spots and blisters that scab. Chickenpox can occasionally cause complications, especially in babies, pregnant women and people with weakened immune systems. Chickenpox is easily spread from person to person by touching or breathing in virus particles. People are at risk for getting sick for up to 21 days after being exposed.

The Health Department recommends the following for children who may have been exposed to chickenpox in the past 21 days:

1. If your child has a weakened immune system or is pregnant:
 - Make an appointment with your child’s doctor right away. Show them the reverse side of this letter so they can make sure your child is immune to varicella.
2. If your child is less than 12 months of age and has not had chickenpox:
 - Your child is too young to get the varicella vaccine and must stay home for 21 days after being exposed.
3. If your child is 12 months of age or older, has not had chickenpox and has not received the varicella vaccine:
 - Make an appointment with your child’s doctor right away and show them the reverse side of this letter.
 - Once your child is vaccinated with varicella vaccine, they may return to school. Bring a record of your child’s varicella vaccination to school.
4. If your child received one dose of varicella vaccine more than four weeks ago:
 - Make an appointment with your child’s doctor right away to get the second dose.
5. If your child has a rash:
 - Keep your child home from child care, school and activities such as sports or play groups. See point 6 below for information about when your child can return to these activities.
 - Make an appointment with your child’s doctor right away and tell the doctor that your child may have been exposed to chickenpox. Show the reverse side of this letter to your doctor.
6. If the doctor diagnoses your child with chickenpox:
 - Ask your child’s doctor for a note for school/child care that states your child has chickenpox.
 - Tell the school/child care that your child has been diagnosed with chickenpox.
 - Keep your child home from school/child care and activities such as sports or play groups until all the blisters have dried and scabbed over and no new spots have appeared for 24 hours.
7. If the doctor does NOT diagnose your child with chickenpox:
 - Ask for a note from the doctor telling the school/child care that your child’s rash is NOT from chickenpox or another contagious disease.

People who have not had chickenpox should receive two doses of the varicella vaccine to reduce the chance of getting sick. The varicella vaccine is usually given to children at 12 months of age with a second dose at 4 to 6 years of age. All children who go to child care or school are required to have the varicella vaccine. Please make sure your family’s vaccinations are up-to-date, including the varicella vaccine. If you need a varicella vaccine, contact your doctor to find a vaccine provider near you.

Visit nyc.gov/health and search “chickenpox” for more information. If you have any questions or concerns, please call 347-396-2402 or _____

Supervising Medical Doctor: _____ at tel # _____

Supervising Nurse: _____ at tel # _____



Dear Provider:

Your patient may have been exposed to varicella. Varicella is characterized by a generalized, pruritic rash. People who are not fully vaccinated against varicella are at the highest risk for varicella infection. People who were previously vaccinated may develop varicella, but symptoms are often mild with a non-vesicular rash.

For Patients Without Symptoms Who Are Exposed to Varicella and Are Not Immune:

- The varicella vaccine should be administered within three days of initial exposure as post-exposure prophylaxis to people 12 months of age and older who lack evidence of immunity to varicella. Vaccination beyond this time frame is important for protecting these people from future exposures but may not protect against exposures that have already occurred. Please provide a record of varicella vaccination.
- Varicella zoster immune globulin (VariZIG) post-exposure prophylaxis is reserved for people at high risk for severe disease who lack evidence of immunity to varicella and for whom the varicella vaccine is contraindicated. This includes immunocompromised or pregnant people without evidence of immunity, newborn infants whose mothers have symptoms of varicella around the time of delivery, and certain hospitalized premature infants. VariZIG should be administered as soon as possible after, but within 10 days of, exposure. People should not receive measles- or varicella-containing vaccine for at least five months after receiving VariZIG. VariZIG can be ordered from FFF Enterprises at 800-843-7477. For additional information about VariZIG indications and dosing, visit cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6228a4.htmhtt.
- Because VariZIG may prolong the incubation period, people who receive VariZIG should stay at home for 28 days after exposure.

For Patients With Symptoms and Exposed to Varicella:

- People with varicella are contagious two days before rash onset until all lesions have crusted and no new lesions have appeared for 24 hours. They must stay home during this time frame.
- The preferred diagnostic test is polymerase chain reaction (PCR) of skin lesions (vesicles, scabs, maculopapular lesions). PCR testing can be performed at commercial laboratories. For additional information on specimen collection, visit cdc.gov/chickenpox/lab-testing/index.html. IgM serologic testing is less sensitive than PCR.
- Document and communicate all clinical decisions related to varicella to the school or child care.

For all households: Ensure household members are immune to varicella to protect against future exposures. The varicella vaccine should be given to children routinely at 12 months of age with a second dose at 4 to 6 years of age.

Visit nyc.gov/health and search “chickenpox” to find information for providers. If you have questions, call 347-396-2402.

Sincerely,

Bureau of Immunization
New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene