

Chickenpox: Important Notice to Parents

There has been a recent increase of chickenpox (varicella) cases in the community and at Kepner Beacon Middle School. Chickenpox is a common illness that causes an itchy rash and red spots or blisters all over the body. It is most common in children, but adults can get it too. Chickenpox is very contagious and can spread easily from person to person. The best way to prevent chickenpox is to get vaccinated.

CHICKENPOX SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

Please watch out for the following symptoms in your child:

- Fever, runny nose, cough
- Loss of appetite
- Headache
- Fatigue
- Itchy rash 1-2 days after first symptoms. The rash usually appears more on the chest, back and face than the arms and legs but can spread over the entire body. Rash appears as small, flat spots that become blister-like, then scab over.

If your child develops these symptoms, do not take them to school until they have been seen by a healthcare provider.

HOW IS IT SPREAD?

- Chickenpox is spread through the air when a sick person coughs and/or sneezes. Direct contact with the rash of an infected person or sharing food and drinks can also spread chickenpox. Symptoms may begin 10-21 days (usually 14-16 days) after exposure to a sick person.

HOW LONG CAN A PERSON PASS THE INFECTION TO OTHERS?

- A person is contagious with chickenpox 1-2 days before the rash appears until all the blisters have crusted or scabbed over (usually 5 days after start of rash).
- **Students and/or staff with chickenpox cannot return to school until all blisters have formed scabs and crusted.**

CHICKENPOX VACCINE INFORMATION

- The chickenpox vaccine is one of the immunizations required for students to attend school in Colorado, unless an exemption is filed.
- How to get vaccinated:
 - Contact your child's healthcare provider
 - Make an appointment through the Denver Health Immunization Clinic or other neighborhood clinic
 - Speak with the nurse at Kepner Beacon Middle School for other vaccination resources

For additional questions, please contact:

- Denver Department of Public Health and Environment Epidemiology and Disease Intervention Team
 - Phone: 720-865-5767
 - Email: ddphe_epi@denvergov.org