



FACT SHEET

CHICKENPOX (VARICELLA VACCINE)



The varicella vaccine protects children against chickenpox. **It is a required vaccine for all children born on or after 2010 and who attend school or a licensed childcare center in Ontario.** This vaccine is publicly funded (free) to children born on or after January 1, 2000.

When is this vaccine given?

Part of **Ontario's Routine Immunization schedule**, children are eligible to receive the chickenpox vaccine at 15 months of age. They should receive a second dose of the vaccine between the ages of 4-6; usually as MMRV (measles, mumps, rubella, varicella)

Visit	Child's age	Vaccine
1	2 months	DTaP-IPV-Hib, Pneu-C-13, Rot-1
2	4 months	DTaP-IPV-Hib, Pneu-C-13, Rot-1
3	6 months	DTaP-IPV-Hib
4	12 months	MMR, Pneu-C-13, Men-C-C
5	15 months	Var
6	18 Months	DTaP-IPV-Hib
7	4 to 6 years	MMR-Var, Tdap-IPV

Common vaccine brand:

Varicella vaccine-Varilrix or Varivax III

Combined MMRV- Priorix tetra or ProQuad

What Is Varicella (Chickenpox)?

Chickenpox is a common illness caused by the varicella-zoster virus. Chickenpox causes flu-like symptoms such as fatigue, mild headache, fever, chills, aches, and pains followed by raised itchy red blisters that can be anywhere on the body. The spots turn into fluid-filled blisters. Some people have only a few blisters while others can have as many as 500.

How is Varicella spread?

Chickenpox is extremely contagious and spreads very quickly from person to person. Chickenpox spreads through the air, from someone coughing or sneezing as well as through saliva. You can also get chickenpox if you touch the fluid from a blister.

The virus that causes chickenpox can resurface later in life as shingles. It is possible for someone with shingles to spread the virus and infect a person who has not had the chickenpox vaccine.

Did you know?

Babies have maternal antibodies (Mom's antibodies are transferred to unborn baby near the end of pregnancy). This interferes with the vaccine; therefore, **the varicella vaccine cannot be given before the child's first birthday.** Revaccination is recommended if the vaccine was given too early.

Pregnant woman with chickenpox can pass it onto their unborn baby in the womb before birth. This may cause birth defects. Mothers with chicken pox can also give it to their newborn baby after birth. This can be severe or even life threatening to newborn babies, and anyone with a weak immune system.

Continued on reverse

Why is it important to get vaccinated?

Chickenpox infection can cause serious complications such as:

- Bacterial skin infections
- Flesh-eating disease
- Pneumonia
- Encephalitis (infection of the brain)
- Other infections (i.e., blood)

Is the Varicella vaccine safe?

Yes. Serious side effects are rare. Mild pain, swelling or redness for a few days is common where the needle was given. Some people may get a very mild case of chickenpox 1 or 2 weeks after they get the vaccine. They will most likely have less than 50 spots.

When should I call my health care provider?

Call your health care provider or go to the nearest emergency department if any of the following symptoms develop within 3 days of getting the vaccine:

- hives
- swelling of the face or mouth
- trouble breathing
- very pale color and serious drowsiness
- high fever (over 40°C or 104°F)
- convulsions or seizures

Who should not get the varicella vaccine?

- Anyone who is ill with a fever or infection worse than a common cold.
- People who have had an allergic reaction to the vaccine or something in the vaccine.
- Anaphylaxis to chickenpox vaccine

- Anyone who is pregnant or trying to get pregnant.
- Babies under one year of age
- People who have had chickenpox may not need to get the vaccine. Bloodwork can be done to ensure immunity.
- The chickenpox vaccine can be given on the same day as the MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) vaccine or at least 28 days apart.

Why is it important to keep a record?

RCDHU reviews immunization records annually for each child who attends a licensed daycare or school. As required by the [Immunization of School Pupils Act, 1990 \(ISPA\)](#) and the [Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 \(CCEYA\)](#), families need to report immunization records to their local public health unit to ensure that all children received the required vaccines. After any vaccination, make sure your personal immunization record, such as your "[Yellow Card](#)", is updated. Keep it in a safe place!

How do I report my vaccination to RCDHU?

Ways to report Immunization Records	
Visit www.rcdhu.com 📍 Immunization	
📍 Report Immunization here accordion	
🖥️ Online	Immunization Connect Ontario (ICON)
✉️ Email	immunization@rcdhu.com
📠 Fax	613-735-3067
✉️ mail	141 Lake Street, Pembroke, ON K8A 5L8
For More Information	
📞 call	613-732-9436 or 1-833-773-0004
 	@RCDHealthunit

Always include client's legal name and date of birth on the records you are submitting. The health card number is highly recommended to help us identify the right client file.

Source: Adapted from the Ministry of Health.

Visit our website at www.rcdhu.com

"Optimal Health for All in Renfrew County and District"