



Denton County Health Department
CHICKENPOX ALERT
 February 1, 2008



Two elementary schools in Denton County have recently reported clusters of vaccine-modified chickenpox among their students, and we continue to see sporadic cases of the disease across the county.

The Texas Department of State Health Services recommends children receive two doses of varicella vaccine. This notice is to inform you that in schools with clusters of chickenpox cases, DCHD is urging parents to take their children in for the booster dose of varicella vaccine if they have not already done so. DCHD offers varicella vaccine regardless of ability to pay. DCHD also carries the shingles vaccine for older adults, which is available at a very reasonable cost.

This is also to request your assistance in administering the vaccine and in ensuring that children you diagnose with chickenpox are excluded from school. As you know, children who have been vaccinated for chickenpox sometimes develop vaccine-modified illness. The chart below differentiates presentation of illness between unvaccinated and vaccinated individuals, and includes school exclusion requirements.

Chickenpox is reportable to the health department within one week of diagnosis. Please report cases to Jessica Gullion, PhD, Chief Epidemiologist for the Denton County Health Department, by phone at (940) 349-2916, or by fax at (940) 349-5078. When faxing case reports, please include the following data: Name, date of birth, sex, race, address, date of onset, and date of vaccine if vaccinated.

Typical Varicella Presentation (Unvaccinated individuals)	Varicella in Vaccinated Individuals More than 42 Days after Vaccination (Breakthrough Disease)
Typically consists of 250 to 500 lesions and other systemic symptoms	Milder with fewer than 50 skin lesions
Mild fever	Lower rate of fever
Longer rash duration : 5-7 days	Shorter rash duration: 3 days or less
Generalized, pruritic, vesicular rash	Maculopapular with few or no vesicles (may resemble insect bites)
Patients are most infectious from 1 to 2 days before to shortly after onset of the rash, but may persist until crusting of the lesions.	These individuals are still considered infectious; although their infectivity may be less
Individuals should be excluded from school or child care centers for at least five days or until the lesions become dry	Individuals should be excluded from school or child care centers until the lesions become dry, fade, or no more appear (at least three days)

Sources: American Academy of Pediatrics. In: Pickering LK, ed. *Red Book: 2003 Report of the Committee on Infectious Diseases*. 26th ed. Elk Grove Village, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics; 2003.
 Texas Department of Health, Vaccine-Preventable Disease Surveillance Guidelines, April 10, 2002. Stock No. 6-106.
 Vazquez, M, LaRussa, PS, Gershon, AA, Niccolai, LM, Muehlenbein, CE, Steinberg, SP, and Shapiro, ED. Effectiveness Over Time of Varicella Vaccine. *JAMA*. 291: 851 – 855, 2004.