



Lincolnshire-Prairie View School District 103
Daniel Wright Junior High School
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NOTIFICATION OF VARICELLA (CHICKENPOX)/SHINGLES INFECTION

A case of Chickenpox/Shingles has been reported in your child's grade level. We are passing this information on to you so that you can do your part in controlling the spread of this disease and in protecting the health of your child. Persons at higher risk include pregnant women, people with compromised immune systems and newborn babies.

Varicella is an acute infection caused by the herpes zoster virus. Shingles is caused by the varicella---zoster virus, the same virus that causes chickenpox. After an attack of chickenpox, the virus lies dormant in the nerve tissue. As we get older, it is possible for the virus to reappear in the form of shingles.

Incubation period: (the time between exposure to the disease and the appearance of symptoms) Can be 10 – 21 days, but is usually 13 – 17 days.

Contagious period: (when the disease can be transmitted to another person) Usually 1 – 2 days before the rash appears until all the blisters have crusted.

Signs and symptoms:

Child may have fever, irritability, tiredness, and lack of appetite 1 – 2 days before the rash appears. A rash of small blisters appears on the trunk, then on the rest of the body. The rash can be extremely itchy. The blisters break easily and form a scab/crust. The fluid in the blisters is highly contagious. Early signs of shingles include burning or shooting pain and tingling or itching generally located on one side of the body or face. The pain can be severe. Rash or blisters are present anywhere from 1 to 14 days or longer.

Treatment:

For most children, only supportive care is needed. Contact your doctor if you suspect your child has chickenpox. **DO NOT GIVE YOUR CHILD ASPIRIN OR PRODUCTS CONTAINING ASPIRIN (A SALICYLATE). THIS CAN LEAD TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF ANOTHER DISEASE CALLED REYE'S SYNDROME.** Encourage your child not to scratch or rub the blisters for this can lead to a secondary infection. For Shingles, you should go to your health care provider if you develop a rash. By looking at the rash, your health care provider can tell whether you have shingles and start you on treatment if you do. There is no cure for shingles, but the severity and duration of an attack of shingles can be significantly reduced if you are treated immediately with antiviral medicines.

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How this disease is spread:

This virus is spread by direct contact with an infected person and occasionally by air---borne nose and throat secretions. It can be spread by direct contact with articles contaminated with the fluid from the blisters or tissues with respiratory secretions.

Control of cases:

Children are to be excluded from school for not less than 5 days after the appearance of the rash. All blisters must have crusted/scabs before returning to school.

General prevention measures:

Wash hands carefully and make sure children do not share eating/drinking utensils, clothing or tissues. A varicella (chicken pox) vaccine is required in Illinois for entry into school. The State of Illinois requires that children must have received 2 doses of the Varicella vaccine for chickenpox upon entry to 6th grade. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that adults 60 years of age and older get a single dose of the shingles vaccine even if they have had a prior episode of shingles.

For more information, consult with your child's doctor.

Information provided by Lake County Health Department/Community Health Center

