



QUESTIONS

Q & A

FOR PARENTS ANSWERS

ACVIP : 2020 - 2021

VARICELLA (CHICKENPOX) VACCINE

Why should my child receive Varicella (Chicken pox) Vaccine?

Varicella is a highly contagious disease, which in absence of vaccination, is likely to affect almost all persons. Generally, chickenpox is mild and does not require any treatment but it may be of a serious nature in neonates, very young infants, pregnant women, and people with decreased immunity. rarely, hospitalization may be required. When it occurs in pregnancy, it may lead to serious developmental abnormalities in the newborn.

Children with chicken pox usually present with rashes, some of which appear as red dots, some as red bumps, some with clear fluid and some with scabs. The illness may last for 5-10 days. Rarely, it may be complicated by skin infections, pneumonia, and inflammation of the various parts of brain and/or spinal cord. Later in life, herpes zoster may also develop following chickenpox.

Varicella vaccine can prevent chickenpox and also reduce the chances of developing herpes zoster in future.

Varicella vaccine can also reduce the chances of developing varicella if given within 72 hour of exposure to a case of varicella. *Please consult your doctor as soon as your child gets exposed to a person with chickenpox.*

Which are the chicken pox vaccines available and what is the schedule?

Many brands of the vaccine are available. They may vary in the quantity of the weakened virus. Generally, all the brands are equipotent.

Children need 2 doses of varicella vaccine for adequate protection. The dosage schedule is as follows:

- ✦ Dose 1 at age 15 months.
- ✦ Dose 2: 3-6 months after dose 1.
- ✦ For those >12 years, 2 doses are administered at an interval not less than 4 weeks.
- ✦ It is advisable that all persons have 2 doses of the vaccine.

Despite giving full schedule (2 doses) of the varicella vaccine, varicella may occur in 1% of children, but the disease is generally very mild.

Is it a safe vaccine?

Varicella is a safe vaccine. Pain, redness, or swelling may occur in occasional cases. Few persons may also develop a rash which is milder in nature as compared to the disease. If this happens, the varicella vaccine virus could spread to an unprotected person. Anyone who gets a rash should stay away from people with a weakened immune system and infants until the rash goes away.

Who should receive this vaccine?

All infants and children, who have not had documented varicella, should receive this vaccine.

Who should not receive the Chickenpox vaccine?

- ✦ Severe allergic reaction after a previous dose of varicella vaccine, known allergy to any vaccine component
- ✦ During Pregnancy
- ✦ Has a weakened immune system due to drugs or disease
- ✦ Has a parent, brother, or sister with a history of hereditary or congenital problems with their immunity. The vaccine should be withheld till the prospective vaccinee has been investigated to rule out any disorders of immunity.
- ✦ Is taking salicylates (such as aspirin).

Vaccination should be postponed in those who:

- ✦ Have recently had a blood transfusion or received other blood products.
- ✦ Received certain other vaccines in the past 4 weeks

For more information, please contact your doctor.

