

BROWN COUNTY HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT
Public Health Division



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Dear Parent/Guardian:

This is to inform you that there has been a probable case of chickenpox at MacArthur Elementary. This memo is being sent home to inform you about the condition and what to do.

What is chickenpox?

Chickenpox is a highly communicable disease caused by the varicella virus. Chickenpox is transmitted to others by direct person-to-person contact, by droplet or airborne spread of discharges from an infected person's nose and throat, or indirectly through articles freshly soiled by discharges from the infected person's lesions.

What are the symptoms of chickenpox?

Initial symptoms include sudden onset of fever (up to 102 F) and feeling tired and weak. An itchy blister-like rash soon follows. The blisters (vesicles) eventually dry, crust over, and form scabs. The blisters tend to be more common on covered than exposed parts of the body. They may appear on the scalp, armpits, trunk, and even on eyelids and in the mouth. Complications include difficulty breathing, pneumonia, and secondary bacterial infections of the lesions.

How soon do symptoms appear?

Symptoms commonly appear 13-17 days after exposure with a range of 11-21 days after exposure.

If my child has had the chickenpox vaccine, can they still get chickenpox?

Yes. No vaccine is 100% effective in preventing disease. The vaccine almost always prevents against severe disease. Children who have only received one dose of varicella vaccine instead of two doses may come down with a milder form of the disease, called breakthrough disease. They usually have less than 50 lesions and may not appear very ill. Often the rash is not noticed because it may look like insect bites. However, the individual is still considered infectious.

If your child has received two doses of varicella vaccine or if you have been told by a doctor that they had chickenpox, they are considered protected and no further action is needed. If you are unsure if your child is protected, contact your doctor. Varicella vaccine, if administered within 3 to 5 days after exposure, may prevent or reduce the severity of disease. Even if it is more than 5 days since exposure, immunization is still recommended to protect against future infection.



Public Health
Prevent Promote Protect