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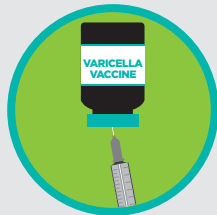
CHICKENPOX (varicella)

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

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ARE YOU SURE YOU USE THE RIGHT MEASURES
TO PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST VARICELLA?

GET INFORMED! GET VACCINATED! GET PROTECTED!



THE DISEASE IN SHORT

Chickenpox (varicella) is still very common in the European Union countries, and vaccination recommendations are not harmonized.

SYMPTOMS

Chickenpox begins with cold symptoms about two weeks after exposure to a sick person, followed by high fever and an itchy rash showing up first on the scalp, the face and chest, then spreading to the rest of the body and changing very quickly to blisters. The rash may also appear inside the mouth or genitals. Patients also usually complain of tiredness, loss of appetite and headache.

TREATMENT

Chickenpox in children is usually self-limiting and no treatment is needed besides relief of the itching and prevention of skin infections. Specific antiviral drugs are usually recommended for adults who are in higher risk for complications or for immune compromised persons. Ready antibodies may also be needed for immune compromised persons or pregnant women with chickenpox.

DID YOU KNOW THAT ABOUT **CHICKENPOX** (Varicella)

- Chickenpox is more severe in infants, adolescents and adults as compared to children?
- The chickenpox (varicella) vaccine contains a live weakened virus?
- Chickenpox (varicella) can be life threatening to persons with weak immune systems?
- Chickenpox (varicella) can be life threatening to pregnant women and their babies around delivery time?
- The same virus that causes chickenpox (varicella) also causes shingles (herpes zoster) later in life?

WHO NEEDS A CHICKENPOX VACCINE?

- **Healthcare workers** who come in contact with neonates or immunocompromised patients.

- **Any adult** who has no immunity (definitive history of the natural disease or history of two doses of the vaccine).

WHO SHOULD NOT GET A CHICKENPOX VACCINE?

- Persons with a history of disease affecting the immune system or taking medications which lower the immune response cannot usually be vaccinated against chickenpox.

WHEN DO I NEED TO GET A CHICKENPOX VACCINE?

VARICELLA VACCINATION

Before starting to work with patients, particularly patients with cancer, neonates or in intensive care.

If you have been exposed to chickenpox (varicella) and have no immunity (definitive history of the natural disease or history of two doses of the vaccine), you need to get the chickenpox (varicella) vaccine as soon as possible.

- If you receive the vaccine within 3-5 days of your exposure to chickenpox (varicella), you can prevent the disease or you may develop only mild symptoms.
- If you are pregnant and you have been exposed to chickenpox (varicella), you may need to receive ready antibodies (immune globulin).

The chickenpox (varicella) vaccine contains live weakened chickenpox (varicella) zoster virus and should be given in two doses 4 -8 weeks apart, with an injection either under the skin or in the muscle.



EFFECTIVENESS OF CHICKENPOX (VARICELLA) VACCINE



is 70-90% effective in preventing varicella



are almost 98% effective. Antibodies remain for at least 10-20 years.

VARICELLA (CHICKENPOX) VACCINE SIDE EFFECTS

Mild (most frequent >1/10 persons vaccinated)

- Local pain at the site of the injection (2-3/10)

Moderate (rare >1/1,000 persons vaccinated)

- Mild rash that looks like chickenpox (up to 3/100 vaccinated)

Severe (very rare 1/10,000- 1/1,000,000 persons vaccinated)

- Seizures (fits) with fever, up to 3-4/10,000 vaccinated children 12-23 months old. Not reported in older children and adults.
- Shingles (later in life).

COMPLICATIONS FROM CHICKENPOX

- Dehydration
- Skin and soft tissue infection, usually from bacteria living on the skin, but sometimes leading to life-threatening soft tissue infections
- Pneumonia (usually in adults)
- Inflammation of the brain leading to difficulties with balance and walking (encephalitis, cerebellitis)
- Bleeding (hemorrhagic varicella)
- Blood infection (sepsis)
- Joint infections (septic arthritis)
- Bone infections (osteomyelitis)
- Toxic shock syndrome

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

1. BZgA, Germany: www.impfen-info.de
2. ECDC- Communication Toolkit on Immunisation: ecdc.europa.eu/en/healthtopics/immunisation/Pages/Communication-toolkit.aspx
3. WHO Europe: Vaccines and immunization, www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/disease-prevention/vaccines-and-immunization
4. NIH, USA: www.vaccines.gov
5. Immunization Action Coalition, USA: www.immunize.org
6. National Centre for Immunisation Research & Surveillance, Australia: www.ncirs.edu.au



HProImmune
Promotion of Immunization for Health Professionals in Europe
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Disclaimer: The consortium partners declare no relevant conflict of interest with direct bearing on the subject matter of the HProImmune project. This pertains to relationships with pharmaceutical companies, biomedical device manufacturers and other companies with relation to vaccines.



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