

To: Parents/Guardians of Students 8th - 12th grades
From: The Colorado Immunizations Branch
Subject: 2 doses of varicella (chickenpox) vaccine required for school attendance
Date: April 14, 2015

This letter is offered to update you on the varicella vaccine requirement for students in 8th through 12th grades for the 2015-16 school year. The Colorado school required immunization schedule now follows the national Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) and all students, kindergarten through 12th grade, will be required to show evidence of 2 varicella vaccines at the beginning of the new school year.

You can also provide evidence of chickenpox disease through the following:

- Documentation from your health care provider that states your student had chickenpox disease
- A positive "screening" for chickenpox disease from a nurse or physician

If you object to your child receiving vaccine, you may sign a personal or religious exemption form. If your child is unable to receive this vaccine for medical reasons, your health care provider can sign a medical exemption.

Information on the importance and effectiveness of 2 doses of varicella vaccine:

"Prior to the availability of varicella vaccine there were approximately 4 million cases of varicella each year in the U.S. Though usually a mild disease in healthy children, an estimated 150,000 to 200,000 people developed complications, about 11,000 people required hospitalization and 100 people died each year from varicella. **Varicella tends to be more severe in adolescents and adults than in young children.** The most common complications from varicella include bacterial superinfection of skin lesions, pneumonia, central nervous system involvement, and thrombocytopenia.

Individuals with 1 dose of varicella vaccine were considered to have about 80 to 85% protection from disease. A 2-dose regimen was adopted in 2006 to further reduce the risk of disease among the 15 to 20% of vaccinated people who may not be fully protected and who could contract disease later in life when it can be more severe."

Immunization Action Coalition, "Ask the Experts"

Thank you,
The Colorado Immunization Branch
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