



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

NEWS RELEASE

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CHICKEN POX OUTBREAK REPORTED AT FALLBROOK SCHOOL ***Ten Students Sick; Parents Urged to Ensure Their Children Are Immunized***

The San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency (HHS) reports that 10 students at Live Oak Elementary School (Fallbrook Union School District) have been diagnosed with chicken pox.

Nine of the students at the school had at least one dose of chicken pox vaccine; one had no dose of the vaccine. Parents are reminded that two doses of vaccine are recommended.

"We urge parents to check with their physicians to make sure their children get two doses of chicken pox vaccine when appropriate, and are inoculated against other vaccine-preventable diseases," said Wilma Wooten, M.D., M.P.H., County Public Health Officer.

None of the students required hospitalization. School officials have informed parents about the outbreak and asked them to make sure their children have had the appropriate vaccinations against the disease.

Chicken pox is a highly contagious disease caused by the varicella virus. The disease is easily spread by coughing, sneezing or contact with chicken pox blisters. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends two doses of chicken pox vaccine for those who do not have immunity -- the first at 12-15 months of age and the second at 4-6 years of age. For those individuals who are older and have only had one vaccination, a second dose is recommended. Ninety-nine percent of people develop immunity after two doses.

Symptoms of chicken pox include a skin rash of blister-like lesions, covering the body but usually more concentrated on the face, scalp, and trunk. The risk of complications increases after puberty and includes bacterial infection of skin lesions, dehydration and pneumonia.

Most, but not all, infected individuals have fever, which develops just before or when the rash appears. If exposed, persons who have been vaccinated against the disease may get a milder illness, with less severe rash (sometimes involving only a few red bumps that look similar to insect bites) and mild or no fever. The incubation period is from 14-16 days from exposure, with a range of 10-21 days. The illness lasts about 5-10 days. For more information on chicken pox and immunizations in general, please call the HHS Immunization Branch at 619-692-8661 or visit the website at www.sdiz.org.

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