



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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CHICKEN POX OUTBREAK REPORTED AT SOLANA BEACH MIDDLE SCHOOL *Five Students Sick; Parents Urged to Ensure Children Have Two Doses of Vaccine*

The San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) is reporting a second chicken pox outbreak this week. This time, five students at Earl Warren Middle School (San Dieguito Union High School District) in Solana Beach have been diagnosed with the disease.

"This is the second varicella outbreak in one week and serves as a reminder of the importance of getting the chicken pox vaccine for protection against the disease," said Wilma Wooten, M.D., M.P.H., County Public Health Officer.

Earlier this week, five students were diagnosed with chicken pox at Sycamore Ridge School in Del Mar.

Four students in the latest outbreak had one dose of chicken pox vaccine. One student had no documented doses. Parents are reminded that two doses of the vaccine are recommended.

"We urge parents to check with their physicians to make sure their children are inoculated against chicken pox and other vaccine-preventable diseases," Wooten added.

Yesterday, school officials informed staff and parents about the outbreak and asked parents to make sure their children have the appropriate vaccinations against the disease. None of the students have been hospitalized. The school will be closed next week for spring break.

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. Older individuals who have had only one vaccination are urged to get a second dose.

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 HHSA Immunization Branch at 619-692-8661 or visit the website at www.sdiz.org.

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