



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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CHICKENPOX OUTBREAK REPORTED AT BONITA VISTA HIGH SCHOOL *Six Students Ill; Parents Urged to Ensure Their Children Are Immunized*

The San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency (HHS) reports that six students at Bonita Vista High School, Chula Vista, in the Sweetwater Union High School District have been diagnosed with chickenpox (varicella). Two of the six students were not vaccinated against chickenpox because they previously had the disease and the other four had only received one dose of chicken pox vaccine.

“This is a good reminder that parents need to check with their physicians to make sure their children get two doses of chickenpox vaccine when appropriate, and are inoculated against other vaccine-preventable diseases,” said Dean Sidelinger, M.D., M.S.Ed., County Deputy Public Health Officer.

All of the students that have been diagnosed are 9th graders. The school has sent letters notifying all of its 2,034 students and 180 staff members about the outbreak. The first case was diagnosed on March 21 and the most recent case was diagnosed on April 12. The student body was on spring break from April 6 to 10.

Chickenpox is a highly contagious disease caused by the varicella virus. The disease is easily spread by coughing, sneezing or contact with chickenpox blisters. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends two doses of chickenpox vaccine for all people one year of age and older who do not have evidence of immunity for the disease. Ninety-nine percent of people develop immunity after two doses.

Symptoms of chickenpox 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 chickenpox 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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