



# COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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## **CHICKEN POX OUTBREAK REPORTED AT SANTEE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL** ***Five Students Have Chicken Pox; Parents Urged To Check If Their Child Is Immunized***

The San Diego County HHS (Health and Human Services Agency) is working with Santee School District officials in their effort to notify parents of students who were possibly exposed to chicken pox (varicella). Five students at Cajon Park Elementary School in Santee have been diagnosed with chicken pox.

"It is important to identify all children who have been exposed and to monitor their symptoms," said Dr. Wilma Wooten, M.D., M.P.H., San Diego County Public Health Officer. "It's imperative that parents check with their physicians to make sure their children are up to date for the chicken pox vaccine."

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.

The students ranged in age from 4 to 11 years old. None required hospitalization and all had previously received one chicken pox vaccine. "This stresses the message that breakthrough infection can occur and emphasizes the need to adhere to the recent recommendations of obtaining two vaccines," states Dr. Wooten.

School officials have sent letters to parents informing them of the outbreak and asking them to make sure their children have been vaccinated against the disease.

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](http://www.sdiz.org).

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