



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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FIVE STUDENTS INFECTED WITH CHICKEN POX AT LOCAL SCHOOL *Parents Urged to Vaccinate Their Children*

The County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) is reporting that five students at King/Chavez Preparatory Academy School have been diagnosed with chicken pox.

The five students attend the same 7th grade class at the charter school. Three of the children had one dose of the chicken pox vaccine, one child had two doses, and one child had no doses.

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.

“It’s extremely important for children to be inoculated against vaccine-preventable diseases, including chicken pox,” said Wilma Wooten, M.D., M.P.H., County Public Health Officer. “We urge parents to check with their physicians to make sure their children have all the recommended vaccines.”

Three of the children are back at school and the remaining two will be out until next week. The school is taking all precautionary measures to ensure the safety of the students. School officials informed staff and parents of 338 students (grades 6, 7, and 8) of the exposure to chicken pox.

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.

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 incubation period is 10-21 days. The illness lasts about 5-10 days.

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.

For more information on chicken pox and immunizations in general, please call the HHSA Immunization Branch at (619) 692-8661 or visit www.sdiz.org.

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