

# District Health Department #10

Serving the counties of  
Crawford, Kalkaska, Lake, Manistee, Mason,  
Mecosta, Missaukee, Newaygo, Oceana, and Wexford



Date: *GRADING High School STAFF, Students, Families*

Dear Parents and Care Givers:

The Health Department has been notified there are cases of Chickenpox at your child's school. Chickenpox is an infectious disease caused by the Varicella-Zoster virus that is spread from person to person through the air (by an infected person's coughing and sneezing) or by direct contact with fluid from the chickenpox blisters. Although it is not usually a serious illness, it can lead to severe complications in some people.

The incubation period (time after exposure to the virus) is generally 14 to 16 days, but can range from 10 to 21 days. Symptoms include fever, a very itchy rash, headache, and tiredness. Infected persons may spread the virus to others 1-2 (and up to 5) days before the rash appears and until all blisters have formed scabs. Fever usually occurs before the rash.

Chickenpox can be prevented in most persons by vaccination with 2 doses of Varicella vaccine. Persons who have had only one dose of vaccine may have a milder form of the disease. Some people may have such a mild case that they have no noticeable symptoms, but they can still spread the infection to others.

Two doses of Varicella vaccine for children aged 12 months and older have been recommended by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American Academy of Family Physicians since June 2006. If your child has not had both doses, he/she should get one as soon as possible. If you signed a waiver deferring Varicella vaccine, the Health Department recommends that your child stay out of school until a full incubation period (21 days) passes with no new cases identified.

Children with 2 doses of vaccine are probably protected, but please watch them for any of the above symptoms. If symptoms are present, keep your child out of school and see your health care provider. The Health Department will continue to monitor the situation. Chickenpox is a reportable disease to the Health Department.

If you have questions please call the Health Department at xxx-xxx-xxxx.

Further information can be viewed at  
<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/varicella/default.htm>.

Dr. James Wilson  
Medical Director  
District Health Department #10