



County of Sacramento

VARICELLA ZOSTER VIRUS (VZV) HEALTH ALERT
March 21, 2016

Situational Update

The Sacramento County Division of Public Health (DPH) has been investigating an ongoing varicella (chickenpox) outbreak among elementary school children. Over 20 cases have been confirmed and more are expected. California law mandates reporting of severe cases of varicella (i.e., cases resulting in hospitalization or death). However, DPH is requiring enhanced reporting of all varicella cases effective immediately due to the current situation. Please see actions requested of clinicians below:

Actions Requested of All Clinicians

1. **Report** to Sacramento County Division of Public Health (SCDPH) electronically via CalREDIE or via confidential fax (916) 854-9709 the following suspected or confirmed cases of varicella:
 - All individual cases of varicella. Please include symptoms, onset date and vaccination history.
 - All hospitalizations due to varicella complications
 - All deaths due to varicella complications
 - All outbreaks of varicella

Medical records for hospitalizations and deaths should be uploaded into the CalREDIE filing cabinet or sent via confidential fax (916) 854-9709.

2. **Consider ordering laboratory testing** if diagnosis or immunity status is unclear
 - VZV PCR/Genotyping from swab/scraping of vesicular fluid, or lesions to confirm diagnosis
 - VZV serologic assays to confirm immunity (VZV Titer) or diagnosis
3. **Encourage varicella vaccination** for anyone without evidence of immunity who does not have medical contraindications.
 - Routine vaccination: Administer a 2-dose series of VAR vaccine at ages 12 through 15 months and 4 through 6 years.
 - Catch-up vaccination: The recommended minimum interval between doses is 3 months for children ages 7 through 12 and 4 weeks for persons age 13 and older.
4. **Implement** infection control precautions
 - All persons with symptoms consistent with varicella (fever, macropapular rash) should be excluded from school or daycare until all lesions have formed scabs.
 - All household contacts of infected children without evidence of immunity should be excluded from school or daycare until 21 days after the rash of the infected child has formed scabs.

If you need information about immunization services for children and adults or need to refer clients or get information regarding clinics please contact the Sacramento County Immunization Assistance Program at 916-875-SHOT (7468) Monday-Friday between 8:00am–5:00pm.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Olivia Kasirye MD in black ink.

Olivia Kasirye, MD, MS
Public Health Officer