



Varicella (Chickenpox) vaccine

What is chickenpox?

Chickenpox is a highly communicable disease. It causes an itchy small fluid-filled blisters (vesicles) and fever. A person with chickenpox may have as many as 500 blisters spread all over the whole body—even inside the mouth, eyelids, or genital area. Chickenpox can be serious especially in babies.

How does chickenpox spread?

Chickenpox spreads easily through air when a person with chickenpox coughs or sneezes. It can also spread by touching an infected person's blisters. Chickenpox can spread 1 to 2 days before the infected person gets a rash until all the blisters have formed scabs.

Why protection against Chickenpox is important?

Chickenpox causes fever and blisters (Vesicles) which are severely itchy and result in severe discomfort to the child. Rarely, it can cause brain infection and also be life threatening. If a pregnant woman suffers from chickenpox, there is a risk of Congenital Varicella Syndrome in the fetus (Limb & eye abnormalities, Brain and spine defects). Hence it is important that all age groups are protected against chickenpox.

How many doses of Chickenpox vaccine are required?

2 doses of Chickenpox vaccine (Injections) are required. For children 12 mth-12 years: 2 doses 3 months apart. For children >13 years: 2 doses 1 month apart.

Who should not take Chickenpox vaccine?

Children who are currently sick, or have T-cell immunodeficiency disorders, leukemias, lymphomas, HIV, children on Aspirin, steroids or long term medications should avoid chickenpox vaccine. They are advised to discuss with their specialist before going for chickenpox vaccination. Chickenpox vaccine should not be given for at least 5 months after blood/plasma transfusion or immunoglobulins.

What is the duration of protection of Chickenpox vaccine? – The protective antibody titers have been demonstrated even 8-20 years after vaccination.

(Edited by Dr. Sanket Kale)