

Varicella (Chickenpox):

What Parents Should Know for
Students Attending Kindergarten
through 12th Grade in Ohio.



Chickenpox Is More Than Just an Itchy Rash

Chickenpox spreads easily from one person to another.

You can catch it from someone else who has chickenpox, by having contact with their rash or if they cough or sneeze near you, or from contact with the rash of someone with shingles.

After being around someone with chickenpox, it can take 10 to 21 days before you start feeling sick or getting the rash.

What are the symptoms of Chickenpox?

Chickenpox can make you feel sick and uncomfortable.

Some signs include:

- An itchy red rash with little blisters.
- Fever (your body feels hot).
- Feeling very tired.
- Headache.

Chickenpox usually gets better in five to 10 days.

Chickenpox Can Sometimes Be Serious.

Most of the time, chickenpox is mild. However, it can be dangerous for:

- Babies.
- Teens and adults.
- Pregnant women.
- People with weak immune systems.



DID YOU KNOW?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) says kids with chickenpox miss, on average, five to six days of school or childcare because they need to stay home until they're no longer contagious and start to feel better.

[Source: CDC Chickenpox \(Varicella\)](#)

The Best Way to Protect Your Child from Chickenpox

The chickenpox (varicella) vaccine helps keep your child safe from getting sick.

Students need two doses of the vaccine:

- First dose at 12 to 15 months.
- Second dose at 4 to 6 years.

It's not too late to get the vaccine!

If your child is starting school and hasn't had both shots, that's okay—there's still time. Talk to your doctor or health clinic to see what your child needs to stay healthy.

A strong start to the school year begins with protection!

Chickenpox vaccines are available at:

- Many doctor's offices.
- [Local Health Departments](#).
- Pharmacies (check with location based on your child's age).

K-12 school vaccine requirements in Ohio:

- **Ohio Revised Code 3313.671** requires students to be fully protected against 10 vaccine-preventable diseases, including chickenpox (varicella).
- During an outbreak at school, any student who cannot show proof of age-appropriate chickenpox (varicella) vaccination should be excluded from school until such proof is provided or until the child is vaccinated with the appropriate dose. Children with written waivers or exemptions should be excluded for 21 days after the onset of the last identified case in the affected school.



Your child may be able to get vaccines for free or at a low cost through the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program. Check with your local health department to see if your child is eligible.

August 2025