



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF  
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE  
Mary T. Bassett, MD, MPH  
*Commissioner*

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To Whom It May Concern:

You may have been exposed to chicken pox at St. Francis Prep High School on May 5<sup>th</sup> to May 7<sup>th</sup>. Chicken pox (varicella) causes a fever and itchy rash with blisters. Chicken pox is very contagious and spreads easily from person to person. Chicken pox is contagious for several days before the rash appears. Rarely more serious complication can occur such as pneumonia or infections of the blisters, particularly in those whose immune system is not working well.

A person who has already had chicken pox is not at risk for getting it again. Vaccination with two doses of the varicella vaccine can protect a person from getting chicken pox if they have not had the disease. The vaccine is recommended to be given to people starting at one year of age. People who are not vaccinated or are too young to be vaccinated may be at risk for getting chicken pox beginning 10 days after the first exposure through 21 days after the last exposure. Recommendations based on your vaccination and disease history follow:

**If you already had chicken pox or if you have blood work showing that you are immune to chicken pox or if you have received two doses of varicella vaccine:**

You should be protected from getting chicken pox.

**If you previously received one dose of varicella vaccine:** You should get a second dose, as long as 4 weeks have passed since the first dose was given. Contact your doctor about getting the shot as soon as possible. Getting a 2<sup>nd</sup> dose of the vaccine will more fully protect you against chicken pox.

**If you have not had chicken pox or the varicella vaccine:** You should speak to your medical provider about getting vaccinated now. Receiving the varicella vaccine within 3 to 5 days of the initial exposure may prevent infection or may lessen the severity if you get sick. If you cannot get vaccinated, you should stay home through 21 days after your last exposure to chicken pox.

**If you are pregnant or have a medical condition involving your immune system:** Contact your doctor immediately to find out if you are immune to chicken pox. Chicken pox can be a very serious illness in people whose immune system is not functioning well or who are pregnant. If you are not immune to chicken pox, your doctor may offer medicine to protect you from getting sick.

If you develop chicken pox, you must remain home and away from other people until the rash is completely scabbed over. Additional information can be found at:

[www.immunize.org/catg.d/p4202.pdf](http://www.immunize.org/catg.d/p4202.pdf).

For questions you may contact the school nurse,  
Mary Pappas, at 718 234 8810 x 234.

Sincerely,  
Jennifer Rosen, MD  
Director, Epidemiology and Surveillance  
Bureau of Immunization

