

DPHHS HAN Advisory

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DPHHS HAN Advisory 20060228A: Notice of Potential Varicella Exposure- Wrestling Meets held 2/25/06 in Lewistown and Malta

Tuesday, February 28, 2006 15:38 MT (3:38 PM MST)

Notice of Potential Varicella Exposure- Wrestling Meets held 2/25/06 in Lewistown and Malta

Two grade school-aged children participating in separate wrestling tournaments have been diagnosed with chickenpox. Unfortunately, both children competed during their infectious periods and may have exposed other susceptible individuals. As a precaution and to assist with recognition of other cases, we are encouraging the jurisdictions notified by this HAN advisory to contact the wrestling clubs involved and provide general information regarding the exposure.

The wrestling meets included the **AAU Regional in Malta** and a **Rugrat's Wrestling meet Lewistown**, both on 2/25. Both children were 8 years of age and wrestled in the 65-75 lb. weight class. While the individuals wrestling with these children will be of most concern, mixing with other wrestlers and contact with items potentially contaminated may be a transmission concern as well.

Clubs from a variety of cities participated and we are encouraging local health agencies to:

- Contact coaching staff and provide general information that can be passed along to parents, **or**

- Obtain lists and contact parents of the children involved.

- *For most exposed, no specific intervention is necessary. However, families and individuals can be encouraged to observe susceptible contacts (individuals without a history of vaccination or illness) for the signs of concern outlined in the DPHHS fact sheet during the next 2-3 weeks.* Individuals developing illness and individuals who are immunosuppressed, pregnant or newborn infants with non-immune mothers who have a documented exposure are encouraged to consult with their medical provider.

Exposure to varicella can be a concern for high-risk individuals. This situation is not an emergency, however, sharing of this information may lead to fewer exposures in the event of additional cases.

Wrestling Clubs Participating, by City:

Rugrat's Tournament- Lewistown (Contact DPHHS for specific contacts if needed.)

City, County

Belt, Cascade

Great Falls, Cascade

Fort Benton, Chouteau

Stanford, Judith Basin

Cut Bank, Glacier

Cascade, Cascade

AAU Regional- Malta (Contact DPHHS for specific contacts if needed.)

City, County

Malta, Phillips

Poplar, Roosevelt

Harlem, Blaine

Glasgow, Valley

Wolf Point, Roosevelt
Plentywood, Sheridan
Sidney, Richland
Havre, Hill
Chinook, Blaine
Scobey, Daniels
Glendive, Dawson

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The goal Montana's Health Alert Network is to transmit information to local public health authorities as quickly as possible, and assign a suitable priority to the message that is sensitive to the impact of a health-related event providing information of immediate of utility relative to the public health and safety of Montanans. For questions or comments relative to Montana's HAN system you may contact the Montana State HAN Coordinator Jim Aspevig at <<mailto:jaspevig@mt.gov>> or the Associate HAN Coordinator Gerry Wheat at <<mailto:gwheat@mt.gov>>

Categories of Health Alert messages:

Health Alert: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

Info Service Message: provides general information regarding a situation or opportunity; does not typically require immediate action.

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Fact Sheet

CHICKENPOX (*varicella herpes, zoster*): What You Need To Know

What is chickenpox?

Chickenpox is a highly communicable disease caused by the Varicella virus, a member of the herpes virus family. Although no longer an officially reportable condition in Montana, chickenpox is one of the most common childhood illnesses reported.

Who gets chickenpox?

Almost everyone gets chickenpox in metropolitan communities, about 75 percent of the population has had chickenpox by age 15 and at least 90 percent by young adulthood. In temperate climates, chickenpox occurs most frequently in winter and early spring.

How is chickenpox spread?

Chickenpox is transmitted to others by direct person-to-person contact, by droplet or airborne spread of discharges from an infected person's nose and throat, or indirectly through articles freshly soiled by discharges from the infectious person's lesions. The scabs themselves are not considered infections.

What are the symptoms of chickenpox?

Initial symptoms include sudden onset of slight fever and feeling tired and weak. These are soon followed by an itchy blister-like rash. The blisters eventually dry, crust over and form scabs. The blisters tend to be more common on covered than on exposed parts of the body. They may appear on the scalp, armpits, trunk and even on the eyelids and in the mouth. Mild or inapparent infections occasionally occur in children. The disease is usually more serious in adults than in children.

How soon do symptoms appear?

Symptoms commonly appear 13-17 days after infection, with a range of 11-21 days.

When and for how long is a person able to spread chickenpox?

A person is able to transmit chickenpox from five days before onset of rash to not more than five days after the appearance of the first lesion. Contagion may be prolonged in people with altered immunity conditions.

Does past infection with chickenpox make a person immune?

Chickenpox generally results in lifelong immunity. However, this infection may remain hidden and recur years later as *Herpes zoster* (shingles) in a proportion of older adults and sometimes in children.

What are the complications associated with chickenpox?

Reye's syndrome has been a potentially serious complication associated with clinical chickenpox. Newborn children (less than one month old) whose mothers are not immune, and patient with leukemia may suffer severe, prolonged or fatal chickenpox. Immunodeficient patients and those on immunosuppressive drugs may have an increased risk of developing a severe form of shingles.

Is there a vaccine for chickenpox?

A vaccine for chickenpox is available. Routine vaccination is recommended for children 12-18 months of age, as well as adolescents 11-12 years of age who do not have a history of chickenpox. In addition, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) has recommended vaccination for certain groups of susceptible adolescents and adults who will have close contact with susceptible persons at high risk for serious complications such as health care workers or family contacts of immunocompromised persons. To protect high-risk newborns and immunodeficient patients from exposure, a shot of varicella zoster immune globulin (VZIG) is effective in modifying or preventing disease if given within 96 hours after exposure to a case of chickenpox.

What can a person or community do to prevent the spread of chickenpox?

The spread of chickenpox can be reduced if people infected with the disease remain home and avoid exposing others who are susceptible. Infected individuals should remain home until one week after the skin eruption began or until the lesions become dry. Pay particular attention to avoiding unnecessary exposure of nonimmune newborns and immunodeficient patients to chickenpox.