

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TO: Grant County Media

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT

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Confirmed & Probable Chickenpox Cases Identified in Grant County

GRANT COUNTY, WA – Grant County Health Officer, Dr. Alexander Brzezny, issues an alert to inform Grant County of a cluster of confirmed and probable chickenpox cases in Grant County. As of 9/14/18, there are 3 known schools affected: Park Orchard Elementary, North Elementary and Longview Elementary. The potential for spread to further schools is high. There was also an exposure on 09/07/2018 at the Source of Life church. With confirmation of the chickenpox virus in Grant County, GCHD is advising individuals to check their children's and their own vaccination status and verify that they are up-to-date with the varicella vaccine.

What is chickenpox and how is it spread?

Chickenpox is a contagious vaccine-preventable disease that can have serious complications (including death), especially for those who are immune compromised or have other health conditions. Infection during pregnancy can cause serious complications for the unborn child. An individual with chickenpox generally presents with a blister-like rash, itching, tiredness, and fever. Persons with chickenpox are contagious **for 1-2 days before the rash appears and continue to be contagious until all the blisters are crusted over, usually in 4-7 days after rash onset.**

Chickenpox is spread to others by direct person-to-person contact, by coughing, sneezing, or spraying saliva while talking or indirectly through articles freshly soiled by discharges from the infected person's lesions. The scabs themselves are not considered infectious.

Signs & symptoms of chickenpox:

- Fever
- Itchy skin with blister rash
- General feeling of illness
- Loss of appetite
- Headache

What to do if you have symptoms:

- **If you or your child has symptoms of chickenpox, call your healthcare provider immediately and keep yourself and/ or your child at home away from others.**
- **Stay home and away from other people and from public settings until you or your child has been cleared by a healthcare provider OR all blisters have crusted over.**



- **Pregnant women who are not immune and get exposed, certain exposed newborn infants and exposed persons with weakened immune systems should see their healthcare provider right away about possible treatment.**

How can we prevent chickenpox?

If you do not have proof of immunity, get vaccinated. The vaccine is 90% effective if received at appropriate intervals. It is impossible to predict who will have a mild case of chickenpox and who will have a serious or even deadly case of the disease. The vaccine is safe and effective.

Immunizations:

Two doses of the vaccine are about 90% effective at preventing chickenpox.

- Routine 2-dose vaccination
 - First dose at 12 through 15 months old
 - Second dose at 4 through 6 years old
- Second dose catch-up vaccination
 - Give longer than 3 months after first dose for children under 13 years of age
- Adolescents and Adults (under 13 years old)
 - Give 2 doses 4 to 8 weeks apart
 - If it has been more than 8 weeks since the first dose, the second dose may be given without restarting the schedule

Chickenpox resources:

[Chickenpox \(Varicella Disease\)](#) | Grant County Health District

[Chickenpox \(Varicella\) Vaccine](#) | WA-DOH

[Chickenpox](#) | CDC

Consultations

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