FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  09/13/2018
TO:
Grant County Healthcare Providers
School Nurses
Grant County Emergency Management

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT
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Confirmed & Probable Varicella Cases
Identified in Grant County

GRANT COUNTY, WA – Grant County Health Officer, Dr. Alexander Brzezny, issues an alert to inform all healthcare providers of a cluster of confirmed and probable varicella cases in Grant County. As of today, there are 3 known schools affected: Park Orchard Elementary, North Elementary and Longview Elementary. There was also exposure on 09/07/2018 at the Source of Life church. GCHD is asking healthcare providers to be vigilant for other possible varicella cases in the community, test those suspected for varicella using approved methods and provide proper exclusion information to suspect cases. With the varicella virus in Grant County, the health district is advising individuals to check their children’s and their own vaccination status and verify that they are up-to-date.

Actions Requested
• Maintain vigilance for possible varicella cases, particularly in patients with a rash or fluid-filled blisters.
• Evaluate any possible cases and test using approved methods. Lab confirmed cases will assist GCHD in their investigation and ability to control an outbreak.
  o Most sensitive method: PCR testing of vesicular lesions
  o Click here for more information from CDC on testing methods, collection and sensitivity
• Ensure evidence of immunity for your healthcare staff and patients and offer immediate vaccination if needed:
  1. Documentation of age-appropriate varicella vaccination (12 months-3 years old- 1 dose; School-age children, adolescents and adults- 2 doses)
  2. Laboratory evidence of immunity or disease
  3. Birth in the U.S. before 1980 (not to be used for healthcare personnel, pregnant women and immunocompromised persons)
  4. Diagnosis or verification of a history of varicella or herpes zoster by a provider
• Review your vaccine inventory and order appropriately.
• Please report suspected cases to GCHD at (509) 766-7960 for investigation and coordination of laboratory testing.
Exclusion
All symptomatic close contacts should be excluded from school, workplace and child care until they have been evaluated for possible varicella. Chickenpox is contagious for 2 days before the rash even shows up. Children should not return to school or childcare until all blisters have scabbed over; this can take several days to weeks. They should also be free of fever before returning to school. Some children who have had only one dose of vaccine may still get a rash when exposed to chickenpox; their illness is shorter and milder, but they can still infect others.

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 ≥3 months after first dose for children <13 years of age

- **Adolescents and Adults (≥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

Varicella information for Healthcare Providers:
- [Vaccine and Preventable Diseases (Varicella)](https://www.cdc.gov/vhf/varicella/index.html) | CDC
- [Surveillance of Vaccine-Preventable Diseases- Varicella](https://www.cdc.gov/vhf/varicella/index.html) | CDC
- [Varicella Information for Health Providers](https://www.cdc.gov/vhf/varicella/index.html) | CDC

Consultations
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