



Chickenpox (Varicella) Vaccine

What you need to know about Varicella

Varicella vaccine protects against **varicella**.

Varicella, also called "**chickenpox**":

- Is a very contagious disease.
- Causes an itchy rash that usually lasts about a week.
- It can also cause :
 - Fever
 - Tiredness
 - Loss of appetite
 - Headache
- Varicella can lead to rare but serious risks such as
 - Skin infections
 - Pneumonia,
 - Inflammation of the blood vessels
 - Swelling of the brain and/or spinal cord covering
 - Infections of the bloodstream, bone, or joints.
 - Some people who get chickenpox get a painful rash called "shingles" (also known as herpes zoster) years later.
- Chickenpox is usually mild, but it can be serious in infants under 12 months of age, adolescents, adults, pregnant people, and people with a weakened immune system. Some people get so sick that they need to be hospitalized. It doesn't happen often, but people can die from chickenpox.
- Most people who are vaccinated with 2 doses of varicella vaccine will be protected for life.

Children will need 2 doses of Varicella vaccine, recommended at:

- First dose at age 12 through 15 months
- Second dose at age 4 through 6 years



Older children, adolescents, and adults also need 2 doses of varicella vaccine if they are not already immune to chickenpox.



Since U.S. vaccination began there has been a **90% decrease** in deaths, meaning **less than 20** people die from Chickenpox each year.



There are **84% fewer hospitalizations** from chickenpox in the U.S. since vaccination began and **92% fewer cases**.



When both doses of Varicella vaccine are received, the vaccine is **90%** effective



Data Sourced from CDC, PA-AAP Report on 2021 SILR Data



Varicella vaccine may be given at the same time as other vaccines. So, a child between 12 months and 12 years of age might receive varicella vaccine together with MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella) vaccine in a single shot, known as MMRV. Your health care provider can give you more information.



WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER VACCINATION

It's normal to experience immune response after vaccination, this is how you know the vaccine is doing its job. These side effects are usually mild and disappear on their own in a few days. Some normal immune responses for Varicella vaccine include:



Soreness, redness, or swelling at injection sight

Chickenpox-like rash

This is uncommon but not dangerous for your child. If this happens, keep away your child away from infants and people with a weakened immune system until the rash goes away. Talk with your health care provider to learn more.



Fever

Tell your vaccination provider if the person getting the vaccine:

- Has had an allergic reaction after a previous dose of varicella vaccine, or has any severe, life-threatening allergies
- Is pregnant or thinks they might be pregnant—pregnant people should not get varicella vaccine
- Has a weakened immune system, or has a parent, brother, or sister with a history of hereditary or congenital immune system problems
- Is taking salicylates (such as aspirin)
- Has recently had a blood transfusion or received other blood products
- Has tuberculosis
- Has gotten any other vaccines in the past 4 weeks

More serious reactions happen very rarely. These can include pneumonia, infection of the brain and/or spinal cord covering, or seizures that are often associated with fever. In people with serious immune system problems, this vaccine may cause an infection that may be life-threatening. People with serious immune system problems should not get varicella vaccine.

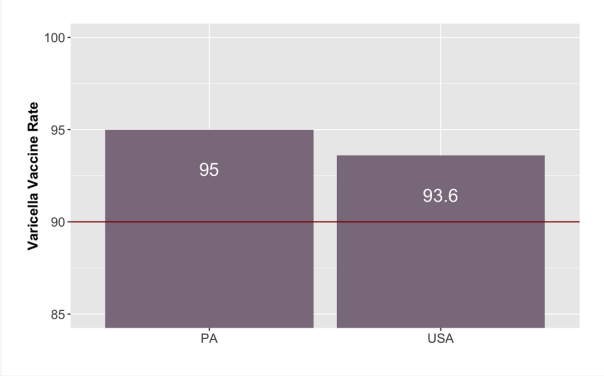
As with any medicine, there is a very remote chance of a vaccine causing a severe allergic reaction, other serious injury, or death.

Varicella Vaccination Rates

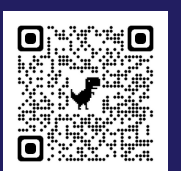
The Healthy People 2020 goal for Varicella vaccination coverage is **90%**.

*Pennsylvania state data are taken from PAAAP Routine Childhood and Adolescent Immunization Report by Pennsylvania County 2018-2021; national data are taken from CDC estimates.

Percentage of Kindergarteners who had received 2 doses of Varicella vaccine by 2020-21 school year in PA and USA*



Scan the QR code to connect with the Pennsylvania Immunization Coalition or a local coalition near you!



For more vaccine information go to: immunizepa.org