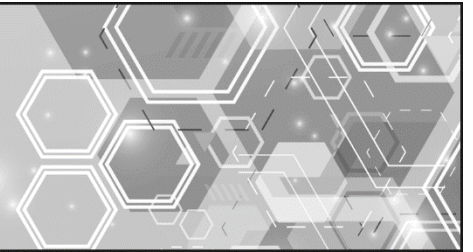




Durham Region Health Department Facts about...



Varicella (Chickenpox) Vaccine

What is it?

- The varicella (chickenpox) vaccine protects against chickenpox – an illness caused by a virus called varicella zoster.
- A person who has had chickenpox can get a painful rash called shingles years later. For more information see Facts About...Chickenpox and Facts About...Shingles
- There are four chickenpox vaccines approved for use in Canada
 - VARIVAX® - protects against chickenpox virus only
 - VARILRIX® - protects against chickenpox virus only
 - PRIORIX-TETRA® - protects against chickenpox virus as well as measles, mumps and rubella
 - ProQuad - protects against chickenpox virus as well as measles, mumps and rubella

How effective is the chickenpox vaccine?

- Chickenpox vaccine gives children 94.4% protection after one dose and 98.3% protection after the second dose.
- Two doses of the chickenpox vaccine protect children 100% from severe chickenpox infections and complications.
- Someone who has had the vaccine may still get chickenpox, but they recover faster, and the symptoms are usually mild.

Who should get the vaccine?

- Two doses of any chickenpox containing vaccine are recommended; anyone 12 months of age or individuals born on or after January 1, 2000 can receive the vaccine for free.
- In Ontario, one dose of the chickenpox vaccine is required after the first birthday under the *Child Care and Early Years Act* (CCEYA).
- In Ontario, two doses of the chickenpox vaccine are required after the first birthday under the *Immunization of School Pupils Act* (ISPA) for students born on or after January 1st, 2010. Students require the first dose when they first enter school.
- People who are at more risk of being exposed to the disease, such as health care providers or emergency service workers.

...over

905-668-2020 or 1-800-841-2729 | durham.ca/health

If you require this information in an accessible format, contact 1-800-841-2729.



What is the schedule for the vaccine?

- For maximum protection, individuals should receive 2 chickenpox vaccines at least 6 weeks apart.

Are there side effects with the vaccine?

- Varicella vaccine is safe and well tolerated. Side effects are usually mild and last a short time.
- The most common side effects are redness, pain and swelling where the needle was given.
- Other side effects may include fatigue, low grade fever and mild rash.
- If you think you are having a serious reaction, see a health care provider right away. Any new or important changes in your health after a vaccine should be reported to a health care provider and the Durham Region Health Department.

Who should NOT get the vaccine?

You should talk with a health care provider before getting the vaccine if you:

- Have had a reaction to any vaccine, or to any part of a vaccine.
- Are sick with a high fever or infection worse than a cold. You should wait until you feel better.
- Are less than 1 year of age.
- Have had chickenpox disease after 1 year of age.
- Are pregnant, trying to get pregnant or breastfeeding.
- Are immunocompromised; you should not receive live vaccines (e.g. varicella vaccine).

For more information on contents of the vaccine, refer to the [Canadian Immunization Guide](#).

Don't forget to update your record of protection

For children in school or childcare, inform Durham Region Health Department of your child's vaccine. Health care providers do not report vaccines to the Health Department automatically. Keep your records updated and in a safe place.

After your child receives a vaccine, update Durham Region Health Department:

- Online at durham.ca/immunize (you may also attach a photo of your record), or
- By calling 1-800-841-2729 or 905-666-6242, or
- By faxing your vaccine/immunization record to 905-666-6216.

The [Immunization Connect Ontario \(ICON\)](#) tool allows you to see your child's vaccine/immunization record online anytime.

January 21, 2025