



Huntley Community School District 158

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May 9, 2016

Dear Marlowe Parents/Guardians,

This letter is to inform you of a single confirmed case of Chicken Pox at our school. We are working closely with the McHenry County Department of Health (MCDH) to ensure that our school remains a healthy and safe environment for students and staff. The MCDH asked that we provide you the following information about the infection and recommendations for response.

What is Chicken Pox?

Chicken Pox is a highly contagious disease caused by a virus called varicella zoster. Usually mild and not life-threatening to otherwise healthy children, Chicken Pox can be a serious illness, particularly in young, un-immunized children. If your child has, or develops symptoms, we ask that you call your physician to determine the appropriate action due to your child possibly having been exposed to chicken pox.

Our Response

- As chicken pox is spread through direct contact with an infected person as well as airborne through coughs and sneezes, we ask our families to watch for symptoms of possible infection.
- Children are to be excluded from school for at least five days after the appearance of the rash. All blisters must have scabs before returning to school.
- Students and staff will be reminded to wash hands carefully, and not to share items such as dining utensils, clothing, tissues.
- All pregnant women who may have been exposed to the virus should call their physicians.

Chicken Pox Signs and Symptoms

- Child may have fever, irritability, tiredness, and lack of appetite 1-2 days before the rash appears. A rash of small blisters appears on the trunk, then on the rest of the body. The rash can be extremely itchy. The blisters break easily and form a scab. The fluid in the blisters is highly contagious.
- An infected child typically will show symptoms between 13-17 days after exposure to the virus, though symptoms may begin as early as 10 days or as late as 21 days after exposure.
- An infected child is considered contagious 1-2 days before the rash appears (while showing other symptoms), through the period of infection until all blisters have crusted.
- Chicken Pox can be spread through direct contact with fluid from blisters, throat and nose secretions.

Treatment:

For most children, only supportive care is needed. Contact your doctor if you suspect your child has Chicken Pox. **DO NOT GIVE YOUR CHILD ASPIRIN OR PRODUCTS CONTAINING ASPIRIN (A SALICYLATE). THIS CAN LEAD TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF ANOTHER DISEASE CALLED REYE'S SYNDROME.** Encourage your child not to scratch or rub the blisters for this can lead to a secondary infection.

General Preventative Measures:

Wash hands carefully and make sure children do not share eating/drinking utensils, clothing or tissues. A vaccine is now available. For more information consult with your child's doctor. If you have additional questions, please call your child's physician or the McHenry County Department of Health at 815-334-4500.

Thank you,
Adam Zehr, Principal

Michele Knaizer, Nurse