

Varicella (Chickenpox)

Protecting Your Child: What Every Parent Should Know

i Before the vaccine, chickenpox caused over **10,000 hospitalizations** and **100 deaths** per year in the U.S.



The Vaccine

- Approved in the U.S. in 1995

How it works:

- Contains a weakened (live attenuated) virus that helps the immune system recognize and fight off the virus without causing serious illness.

Dosage:

- 2 doses
 - First dose at 12-15 months
 - Second dose at 4-6 years
- Mild side effects: soreness, fever, or a few small bumps that resemble chickenpox

i Two doses of vaccine are **98% effective** at preventing any chickenpox and nearly **100% effective** at preventing severe cases.

What is Varicella (Chickenpox)?



A highly contagious virus that causes a blister-like rash, itching, fever, and tiredness.

Most children recover, but chickenpox can lead to skin infections, pneumonia, encephalitis (brain swelling), and death, especially in infants, teens, and people with weak immune systems.

Who's most vulnerable? Unvaccinated children, newborns, pregnant people, and immunocompromised individuals.

Is the Vaccine Safe? Yes.

- Over 25 years of safe use in children in the U.S.
- Millions of doses have been administered with strong safety monitoring
- Reviewed and approved by the FDA
- No link to long-term illness or developmental problems.



Bonus: The vaccine also helps prevent **shingles**, which occurs when the virus reactivates in the body later in life.

Support & Guidance

Your child's pediatrician can guide you on timing, catch-up shots, and combination options (like MMRV).

Trusted Resources: [AAP HealthyChildren.org](https://www.aap.org/healthychildren)

Alternatives?

- There is no safe alternative to vaccination.
- "Natural infection" might seem mild, but it can cause serious complications and missed school and work.
- Vaccinating also protects others in your family and community who may not be able to get the vaccine.



In some communities, vaccine exemptions have led to outbreaks.



Vaccinating is a safe, proven step that protects your child now and into adulthood. We're here to answer your questions, support your decisions, and celebrate the protection you give your family.

