

CHICKEN POX VACCINE (Varivax)

The chicken pox vaccine is a live attenuated virus. It is available for individuals 12 months of age and older. A booster, 4-8 weeks after the initial dose, is given to ensure more continued immunity. The duration of protection following vaccination with Varivax is unknown at present. Likewise, it is not known whether Varivax, given immediately following exposure to a natural chicken pox infection, will prevent illness.

Side-effects

Reactions to the vaccine are rare. However, some people do have minor problems. Some of the reactions to the vaccine that may occur include:

- pain and redness at the site of the injection
- fever
- upper respiratory illness
- cough
- irritability and nervousness
- fatigue
- diarrhea
- nausea and vomiting
- rash
- eye complaints
- aching muscles and joints
- headache
- allergic reaction (hives)

Tylenol can be taken for fever, headache and body aches. Avoid aspirin and aspirin containing products for 6 weeks after vaccination. If reactions are more severe (shortness of breath, hives), please contact the University Health Services or your health care provider or your local emergency room. If you develop a rash, avoid close contact with susceptible individuals (newborns, pregnant women and immune compromised persons) for the duration of the rash.

Contraindications

The vaccine should **not** be taken if you have any of the following conditions:

- You are allergic to any component of the vaccine.
- You are severely allergic to neomycin.
- You have any illness that makes it difficult to fight infection (leukemia, cancer, lymphoma, AIDS).
- You should postpone vaccination if you have a fever due to a cold, or other infection.
- You should not be vaccinated if you are pregnant, and pregnancy should be avoided for three months after the vaccine is given.

A nurse will screen each individual prior to giving the vaccine and monitor any immediate reaction.

Check our website: www.uhs.berkeley.edu to learn more about this medical concern or others.

For an appointment www.uhs.berkeley.edu or call **510-642-2000**

Clinic Nurse **510-643-7197** for advice