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Public Announcement

Chickenpox (Varicella) Cases Increasing in Area. What to Do and How to Prevent.

FORT DEFIANCE, AZ – Fort Defiance Indian Hospital Board (FDIHB) has received information that several cases of varicella (chickenpox) have recently been confirmed in Ganado, Arizona.

What is Varicella (chickenpox): Varicella (chickenpox) is a highly contagious viral disease that causes a blister-like rash, itching, tiredness and fever. Chickenpox can have serious complications in babies, pregnant people and those with weakened immune systems. People who have previously had chickenpox (adults born before 1980) and others who have had chickenpox in the past are not at risk. Individuals who have had 2 doses of the varicella vaccine (and are not taking medications that suppress the immune system) are at very low risk.

What to do if you or your child was exposed to a confirmed chickenpox case:

- Individuals who know they were exposed and have never had chickenpox and have not received 2 doses of the varicella vaccine should **contact their healthcare provider as soon as possible**, because receiving the vaccine or immune globulin within 5 days after the exposure can prevent illness.
- Anyone who develops varicella symptoms should stay home and seek medical attention if symptoms become severe.

How to Prevent Varicella: The best way to prevent varicella (chickenpox) is to be vaccinated with a varicella-containing vaccine. During a varicella (chickenpox) outbreak it is important that all children who do not have a medical contraindication receive their first dose of the varicella vaccine at 12 months and the second dose at age 4. Talk to your healthcare provider to make sure you and your family are up to date on vaccines. Vaccines are provided at Tséhootsooí Medical Center Primary Care Clinic 928.729.8032 and Pediatric Clinic 928.729.8710

For more information about Varicella (chickenpox) visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/chickenpox/about/index.html>

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