

# Immunization... Your Best Protection

CU Healthy

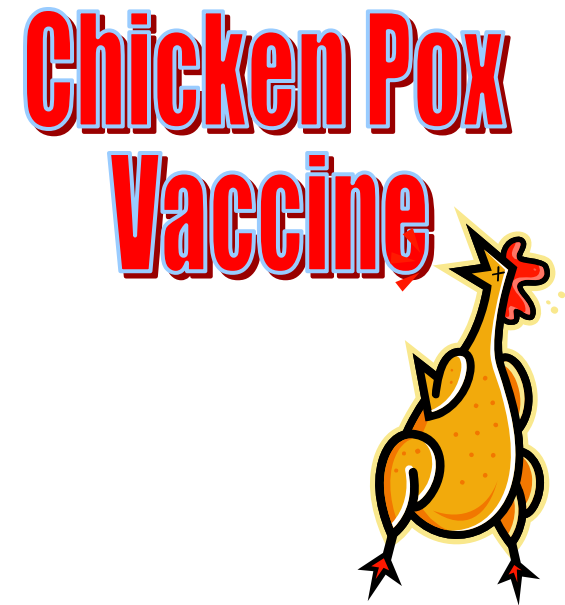
**HCS** wants to CU Healthy! The Health Promotion Team at HCS tries to achieve this through our:

- Resource Centre
- Student Peer Interns
- Health Promotion Advisory Committee
- Website ([carleton.ca/health](http://carleton.ca/health))
- Facebook page
- Newsletters, class presentations, workshops and more . . .

The Health Promotion Team promotes healthy lifestyles and wellness and can provide you with information about stress, colds, nutrition, sexuality, alcohol, etc. Contact the Resource Centre for more information at 613-520-2600 ext. 6544 or [cu\\_healthy@carleton.ca](mailto:cu_healthy@carleton.ca).



2600 CTTC Building  
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# What is chicken pox (varicella)?

Chicken pox is a common childhood illness that also causes illness in adolescents and adults. It is caused by a virus called varicella-zoster. Chicken pox is a highly contagious disease that is easily spread through the air or by direct contact with the fluid filled chicken pox blisters.

## Can chicken pox cause serious illness?

Chickenpox can cause problems such as scarring of the skin, skin infections, and pneumonia. Rarely, more serious illness can occur, such as inflammation of the brain (encephalitis). A few people die every year in Canada from chickenpox. Serious chickenpox illness is not common, but it can happen in anyone including healthy children. Serious effects are more likely to happen in teenagers or adults who did not have chickenpox as children, or in those who have weakened immune systems.



## How well does the new chicken pox vaccine (varicella vaccine) protect against chickenpox?

This vaccine provides protection in 85-90 percent of individuals when given in the advised number of shots.

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## Is the chicken pox vaccine safe?

YES. It is a safe and effective vaccine that can be given to children over 12 months of age. Children 12 months to 12 years of age require only one dose of the vaccine. People 13 years of age and older need two doses of the vaccine (second dose given four to eight weeks after the first dose).

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## Does the chicken pox vaccine have any side effects?

Occasionally, people will experience soreness, redness, or some swelling where they have been injected with the vaccine. There is rarely fever or a mild rash. If fever does occur, children can be given acetaminophen (e.g. Tylenol or Tempra). **Products containing salicylates such as aspirin should not be used.**

## Who should not have the varicella vaccine?

The doctor may decide not to give the chickenpox vaccine (varicella vaccine):

- If the person has had a serious allergic reaction to a similar vaccine or to a substance in the chicken pox vaccine
- If the person is ill
- If the person is pregnant or wishing to become pregnant within the next three months
- If the person is breastfeeding



## How often does a person need a shot for chickenpox?

Information suggests that the initial shot (or shots) for chickenpox protect the average healthy person for at least 20 years. However, more research is needed to find out exactly how long protection lasts. Right now, no booster shots are recommended.

**Ask your doctor for more information about the Chicken Pox Vaccine. Call Health and Counselling Services at 613-520-6674 for an appointment.**