



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CHICKENPOX OUTBREAK REPORTED AT XARA GARDEN SCHOOL ***Six Students Ill; Parents Urged to Ensure Their Children Are Immunized***

The San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) reports that six students at Xara Garden School, a K-2 charter school sponsored by the Lakeside Union School District, have been diagnosed with chickenpox (varicella). None of the six students were vaccinated against chickenpox.

“Chickenpox is a preventable disease. We encourage parents to make sure their children get immunized with two doses of chicken pox vaccine when appropriate,” said Wilma Wooten, M.D., M.P.H., County Public Health Officer. “Getting immunity as a result of being vaccinated is much safer than the immunity one gets as a result of having the active disease. Also, vaccination can prevent the spread of the disease and associated complications.”

Five of the students that have been diagnosed are kindergartners and one is a first grader. The school has sent letters notifying all of its students and staff about the outbreak.

Chickenpox is a highly contagious disease caused by the varicella virus. The disease is easily spread by coughing, sneezing or contact with chickenpox blisters. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends two doses of chickenpox vaccine for all people one year of age and older who do not have evidence of immunity for the disease. Ninety-nine percent of people develop immunity after two doses.

Symptoms of chickenpox include a skin rash of blister-like lesions, covering the body but usually more concentrated on the face, scalp, and trunk. The risk of complications increases after puberty and includes bacterial infection of skin lesions, dehydration and pneumonia.

Most, but not all, infected individuals have fever, which develops just before or when the rash appears. If exposed, persons who have been vaccinated against the disease may get a milder illness, with less severe rash (sometimes involving only a few red bumps that look similar to insect bites) and mild or no fever. The incubation period is from 14-16 days from exposure, with a range of 10-21 days. The illness lasts about 5-10 days. For more information on chickenpox and immunizations in general, please call the HHSA Immunization Branch at 619-692-8661 or visit the website at www.sdiz.org.

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