

**To:** Parents/Guardians of Students 8<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> grades  
**From:** The Colorado Immunizations Branch  
**Subject:** 2 doses of varicella (chickenpox) vaccine required for school attendance  
**Date:** April 14, 2015

This letter is offered to update you on the varicella vaccine requirement for students in 8<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grades for the 2015-16 school year. The Colorado school required immunization schedule now follows the national Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) and all students, kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade, will be required to show evidence of 2 varicella vaccines at the beginning of the new school year.

You can also provide evidence of chickenpox disease through the following:

- Documentation from your health care provider that states your student had chickenpox disease
- A positive "screening" for chickenpox disease from a nurse or physician

If you object to your child receiving vaccine, you may sign a personal or religious exemption form. If your child is unable to receive this vaccine for medical reasons, your health care provider can sign a medical exemption.

**Information on the importance and effectiveness of 2 doses of varicella vaccine:**

"Prior to the availability of varicella vaccine there were approximately 4 million cases of varicella each year in the U.S. Though usually a mild disease in healthy children, an estimated 150,000 to 200,000 people developed complications, about 11,000 people required hospitalization and 100 people died each year from varicella. **Varicella tends to be more severe in adolescents and adults than in young children.** The most common complications from varicella include bacterial superinfection of skin lesions, pneumonia, central nervous system involvement, and thrombocytopenia.

Individuals with 1 dose of varicella vaccine were considered to have about 80 to 85% protection from disease. A 2-dose regimen was adopted in 2006 to further reduce the risk of disease among the 15 to 20% of vaccinated people who may not be fully protected and who could contract disease later in life when it can be more severe."

*Immunization Action Coalition, "Ask the Experts"*

Thank you,  
The Colorado Immunization Branch  
303-692-2700

