



Charlie Crist  
Governor

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State Surgeon General

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**MARTIN COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

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## **HEALTH DEPARTMENT URGES BOOSTER SHOT OF CHICKENPOX VACCINE**

Though it is a common childhood virus, getting the chickenpox can be a miserable experience for children and their parents. One of the best ways to reduce your child's risk for chickenpox is get them vaccinated.

In recent weeks, the Martin County Health Department has received reports on about a half a dozen chickenpox cases among Martin County students. "These numbers are fairly average for this time of year, however, the majority of our cases are in the 9-13 year age group. This may be due to waning immunity," said Health Department Epidemiologist, Dr. Karen Thomas, "We do want to remind parents that a second, booster dose of the varicella vaccine is needed to provide maximum protection against the virus.

### **Background**

Chickenpox is a very contagious infection that is spread from person to person either through direct contact with the lesions/blisters or from an infected person's coughing or sneezing. It causes a blister-like rash, itching, tiredness and fever that lasts an average of 4 to 6 days. Most children recover without any problems.

Chickenpox can be spread 1-2 days before the rash starts and until all blisters are crusted over and no new lesions appear within a 24-hour period. It takes between 10-21 days after contact with an infected person for someone to develop the virus. The cases are usually mild for persons who have received the vaccine.

### **What to do**

Current state mandates require that students in kindergarten and first grade receive the booster dose of the varicella vaccine. The coming school year will require students in kindergarten through second grade receive the booster dose.

The varicella vaccine can be obtained from your child's pediatrician or at the Martin County Health Department. Appointments are available by calling (772) 221-4000.

If your child should develop chickenpox, contact your private health care provider and keep your child home from school until the rash has crusted over.

For more information about chickenpox, log on to [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

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