

NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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Chickenpox in Southwest Nebraska

McCook – Several chickenpox cases have been reported to Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD). “The symptoms of chickenpox usually appear as a rash that turns into itchy fluid filled blisters,” shares Melissa Propp, RN, Surveillance Nurse. “It takes about a week for all the blisters to turn into scabs. Other symptoms of chickenpox typically include: fever, tiredness, headache and loss of appetite.”

Most chickenpox has been eliminated in the United States due to vaccine. Two doses of chickenpox vaccine are about 90% effective in preventing chickenpox. The first dose is typically given between 12 and 15 months of age. The second dose is given between ages 4 and 6.

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), chickenpox parties have been held to intentionally expose a child with chickenpox to other children in hopes that they will get the disease. Chickenpox can be serious, especially for infants and even for some children. It is not worth taking the chance of exposing them to chickenpox.

Chickenpox spreads easily, mainly when a person touches or breathes in the virus particles that come from chickenpox blisters. It can also spread through tiny droplets that get into the air when someone who has chickenpox breathes or talks, for example. Chickenpox can spread 1 to 2 days before the infected person gets a rash until all the blisters have formed scabs, typically 5 to 7 days. Symptoms usually show up within 10 to 21 days after exposure.

“Once someone has chickenpox, years later they can have a very painful disease called shingles.” explains Propp. “There is a vaccine for both of these diseases. It is better to be vaccinated than be exposed to a potentially dangerous disease.”

Either shot is available at SWNPHD or you may contact your local healthcare provider or pharmacy.

For more information, contact SWNPHD at 308-345-4223. SWNPHD serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins and Red Willow counties. SWNPHD is located at 404 West 10th (one block north of Arby’s) in McCook or 501 Broadway in Imperial (Moreland building 5th Street entrance). Information can also be found the website at www.swhealth.ne.gov or on Facebook and Twitter.

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