



CIVIC MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL

200 School Street – Bethalto, IL 62010

Phone: 618-377-7230

<http://civicmemorial.bethalto.org>

December 6, 2017

Dear Parent:

This letter is to inform you that two students who attend Civic Memorial High School were diagnosed with varicella (chickenpox). Most children attending school are expected to be protected against varicella infections (like chickenpox) by vaccination or previous disease. However, susceptible children exposed to someone with chickenpox could begin to have symptoms within the next two weeks. Although the course of illness is usually mild and not life-threatening to healthy children, chickenpox may be severe in infants and persons with impaired immune systems. In some cases, chickenpox may cause more serious illness and may even lead to death. School and public health rules require that children with chickenpox be excluded from school a minimum of five days and **until all their chickenpox lesions are dried and crusted over.**

Symptoms of varicella appear most commonly 14-16 days following exposure, but may take as long as 21 days. Symptoms include a fever, a feeling of tiredness and an itchy rash. The rash generally starts as little red spots on the chest, stomach or back and then on the face. The infected person may get only a few spots or a cluster of spots, or he or she may develop hundreds of spots during the first three to five days of the rash. The spots change into clear blisters filled with fluid. These blisters become cloudy, can break open and form a crust or scab in two to four days. The scabs can be very itchy.

Chickenpox is one of the most readily communicable diseases. Chickenpox is contagious one to two days before the rash appears and until all blisters have formed scabs. It can be spread from person to person by direct contact with fluid from the blisters or with secretions from the respiratory tract or by handling an infected person's clothing or bedding. Airborne transmission is possible through sneezing and coughing.

A vaccine that can prevent chickenpox (varicella vaccine) is available and has been shown to be safe for children who are older than 12 months of age. If your child does not have a history of varicella (chickenpox) disease or vaccination, please consult the Madison County Health Department or your child's physician about acquiring vaccination.

Since chickenpox has been introduced into the school environment, be watchful of your child for possible symptoms of chickenpox. If your child or anyone in your household has or develops symptoms that look like chickenpox:

- Contact your regular health care provider to discuss the symptoms and to see if anyone in the home needs to be vaccinated.
- Until the symptoms resolve, avoid contact with others who have not had chickenpox and/or who are not vaccinated against chickenpox. Do not attend school, day care, work, parties and/or other gatherings until the blisters become crusted (about 4-6 days after rash appears), or no new lesions appear within a 24-hour period. Keep all chickenpox spots and blisters and other wounds clean and watch for possible signs of infection; including increasing redness, swelling, drainage and pain at the wound site.

If you or anyone else in your household has a weakened immune system or is pregnant and has never had chickenpox or the vaccine, talk with your doctor immediately.

In a response to the reported cases of Chickenpox, we are working to clean and sanitize student desks, door handles, and other high traffic areas on a daily basis.

WE ARE ALL EAGLES!



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If you or your physician has any further questions, please contact the Madison County Health Department at 618-692-8954 ext. 2.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Justin Newell'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J'.

Mr. Justin Newell
Curriculum Director

WE ARE ALL EAGLES!