Date

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Your child may have recently been exposed to **chickenpox**. Chickenpox is a disease caused by the varicella-zoster virus.

**What are the symptoms of chickenpox?**

Symptoms include a blister-like rash, fever, runny nose, cough, tiredness, and loss of appetite. The small, red bumps will blister over in 3–4 days and then form scabs. A person with chickenpox might have red bumps, fresh blisters, and scabs at the same time. The rash is more noticeable on the trunk than the arms and legs. It may appear inside the mouth and ears or on the genital areas and scalp.

**How is chickenpox spread?**

Chickenpox spreads by touching the blister fluid and also through the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes. A person with chickenpox is contagious 1 to 2 days before the rash appears until all blisters have scabs. An infected person no longer spreads chickenpox when all the blisters have scabs and no new blisters are forming. Children with chickenpox need to be excluded from childcare or school until all the blisters have formed scabs.

**How is chickenpox diagnosed and treated?**

A health care provider can identify chickenpox based on the rash and if your child was in contact with another person with chickenpox. Generally, most cases of chickenpox need comfort measures. Yet, adults usually get very ill, and anyone can develop serious complications, like pneumonia, a brain infection, or a blood stream infection.

**How do you control the spread?**

We can prevent chickenpox through vaccination. Two doses of varicella vaccineare recommended for all children over 12 months of age without evidence of immunity. Vaccination given within 3–5 days after exposure may help to prevent or lessen the disease. Have your child get the chickenpox vaccine if:

* Your child has never had chickenpox.
* Your child has never been vaccinated against chickenpox.
* Your child has had only one dose of vaccine.

If the vaccine is not available through your healthcare provider, you may get the shot from a children’s mobile immunization clinic.

**How do I get more information?**

For more information about chickenpox, contact your healthcare provider.