

Chicken pox immunization



Chicken pox (varicella) causes the largest number of vaccine-preventable deaths in children in the United States. Alarmingly, only 26 percent of children ages 19 to 35 months receive the vaccination. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimate that approximately 60 percent of hospitalizations and 40 percent of deaths due to chicken pox occur in children younger than age 10 years.

The 1995 introduction of Varivax, the chicken pox vaccine, ushered in an era in which parents can prevent themselves and their children from contracting the illness altogether or from suffering the severe symptoms of the illness if it is contracted. Many adults mistakenly believe that chicken pox is a mild illness one should be allowed to acquire naturally. However, chicken pox can be very dangerous and even deadly. In a recent study conducted by the CDC, 7 out of 10 children said that, given the choice, they'd rather have the

shot than suffer from the disease. Seven out of 10 children also considered chickenpox to be worse than many other common childhood ailments, including colds, earaches, sore throat, and fever. The study also found that 3 out of 4 parents do not know that chicken pox can be deadly!

What is chicken pox, and what are the benefits of the vaccine?

Chicken pox is a severe, contagious disease caused by

the varicella zoster virus (VZV). It causes a blistering rash, itching, fever and fatigue, and can lead to severe skin infections, scars, pneumonia, brain damage, or even death. Long-term consequences of the disease also include the potential for developing a painful rash known as 'shingles'. Shingles can occur in people who have had chicken pox many years after the illness.

Please see CHICKEN/3B

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What Will You Receive?

At this time of the year, so much of our time and energy is filled with the excitement and anticipation that comes with gift giving and gift receiving. For many, it is a time filled with high hopes because we figure that we may finally receive that special something that we have had our hearts set on all year.

For some of us who normally do not buy anything extravagant, just for this one time, we might splurge on ourselves or on someone very special to us. Of course, along with the excitement that comes with this time of year, there is also the chance that we may be disappointed. We may not get that special something that we had our hearts set upon. The gift that we picked out for someone that we just knew that they would love does not get the kind of reaction that we had expected. Therefore this time of year can be not only a time of excitement, but it holds the potential of being a time of disappointment.

Perhaps we put too much hope on the effects that the giving of gifts can do for us to make us feel as good and whole as

we would like to feel.

However, as we celebrate this season in our different ways, there is one thing that we can keep in mind and help us keep things in perspective. We can realize that any day that we experience is a gift and that indeed each day comes with its own set of new gifts. It is up to us to unwrap the gifts of the day that are given to us every day.

Each of those gifts has the tremendous potential to bring us closer to the kind of life that we dream about.

In the busyness of this season, receive each day with all the joy and wonder that it brings. Remember to untie the ribbons for each day and reveal the goodness and opportunity that is in store for you. Make the most of each new day. You will be pleasantly surprised at what you receive.

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