

What About Shots for School or Childcare if Your Child has Already had Chickenpox?

Minnesota law says children must get certain immunizations before going to school and childcare – including varicella (chickenpox) – unless they have a legal exemption.

However, after a child has had chickenpox (varicella disease) they are immune to it and don't need to have varicella shots. But starting in the fall of 2010, there is a change in how you need to document that your child has had the chickenpox.

What is the change?

Starting on September 1, 2010, Minnesota schools and childcare centers can no longer accept a parent/guardian's signature as proof that a child has had chickenpox. Instead, a health care provider (doctor, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant) will need to sign a form saying that the child does not need to get varicella shot(s) because:

- They are already immune because they had chickenpox disease that was either laboratory confirmed, medically diagnosed, or described well enough to the health care provider by the parent/guardian to clearly indicate disease, or
- They have a medical reason for not getting the shot(s), or
- They have had a lab test showing they are already immune to chickenpox.

As with all immunizations required for school and childcare, children whose parents are conscientiously opposed to immunization may also receive an exemption.

Why did the law change?

It changed because as more children get their varicella shots, we have less chickenpox disease and more parents/guardians who have never seen a case of chickenpox and can't recognize it. The medical knowledge of a health care provider is needed to make sure a child had the chickenpox – and not some other disease – so they are truly immune.

Not sure your child has had all the other shots required for school or childcare?

Talk to your health care provider or clinic or visit the Minnesota Department of Health's Immunization Program Web site at www.health.state.mn.us/immunize.

For more information

For more information about chickenpox, immunizations, and Minnesota's School Immunization Law call or visit the website of the Minnesota Department of Health Immunization Program:

651-201-5503

1-800-657-3970 (toll free)

www.health.state.mn.us/immunize



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