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OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS

St. Clair County Health Department

2023

SCCHD-08

ISSUE DATE: 12/21/23

TO: St. Clair County Providers, Hospital ICPs, Emergency Departments, Walk-In Clinics, Long Term Care Facilities, Neurologists, ENT's, Pulmonology, OB/GYN, and Pediatricians

FROM: Bailee Danneels RN, BSN, CIC
SCCHD C.D. Coordinator
P: 810- 987-5300 F: 810-985-4340

VARICELLA INFORMATION FOR PROVIDERS AND CLINICIANS:

St. Clair County Health Department (SCCHD) has identified a cluster of confirmed Varicella (Chickenpox) cases involving 9 individuals. Varicella is a vaccine preventable disease that is highly contagious. It can be serious, especially to infants, pregnant persons, and immunocompromised individuals.

Individuals identified in this cluster have traveled within St. Clair County while infectious. If a person is being evaluated and has symptoms consistent with Varicella, please notify St. Clair County Health Department immediately.

The period of communicability for Varicella is 1-2 days before onset of rash until all lesions have crusted. The incubation period is 14-16 days with a range of 10-21 days.

Clinical Case Definition:

An illness with acute onset of diffuse (generalized) macular-papular-vesicular rash without other apparent cause. Varicella rash is itchy and the lesions progress from fluid-filled vesicles to dried crusts and scabs. Other flu-like symptoms may be noticed such as fevers or malaise.

Laboratory Confirmation:

Lab confirmation of identified cases is strongly recommended to confirm diagnosis. **Polymerase chain reaction (PCR)** tests are the method of choice for rapid clinical diagnosis and confirmation. Specimens for varicella virus PCR include swabs of fluid from unroofed vesicles and /or crusts.

Recommendations:

- In accordance with Michigan Public Health Code, it is required to report all **suspect** cases **immediately** to SCCHD.
- Do not rule out diagnosis of Varicella based on immunization status. Although highly effective "breakthrough" cases are seen.
- Strongly recommend Varicella-containing vaccines as well as all other ACIP recommended vaccines.
- Individuals susceptible to Varicella should receive a vaccine as soon as possible, post-exposure vaccination with Varicella vaccine given within 3 days of exposure may prevent illness or modify severity of disease. Prophylactic use of the vaccine up to 5 days after exposure may also be effective.
- Have testing supplies readily available and be knowledgeable on specimen collection process.

Call SCCHD with questions or to report suspect/actual cases at (810) 987-5300. MDHHS Varicella Investigation guidelines: [MDHHS's Varicella Investigation Guidelines](#)