# Varicella Vaccine (Var)

## Indications for Use and Schedule

### Routine Schedule:
- 2 dose series given at/after age 12 months and 4-6 years
- Catch up all persons without evidence of immunity* to chickenpox disease

### Make sure minimum age and minimum intervals are met:
- Minimum age for dose 1 is 12 months of age
- Minimum intervals between doses vary by age:
  - Children 12 mo-12 yr: 3 months between dose 1 & 2
  - Persons 13 yr & older: 4 weeks between dose 1 & 2

### “Live/Live Vaccine Rule”:
- Var, MMR and/or LAIV must be given on the same day or separated by 28 days;
- If not, vaccine(s) given 2nd must be repeated in 28 days

## Vaccine Administration
- Subcutaneous (SC) injection in the upper arm or the outer aspect of the thigh
- 5/8 inch needle; 23-25 gauge (all ages)
- Can be given with other vaccines, at the same visit (Use separate sites; space at least 1 inch apart)

## Storage and Handling
- Store in the freezer only
  - -58°F to +5°F (-50ºC to -15ºC)
- Keep in the original box
- Protect from light
- Reconstitute using the Merck diluent only
- Administer within 30 min of reconstituting

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*Evidence of Immunity*
- Documentation of age-appropriate vaccination
  - Preschool-aged children 12 mo of age or older: one dose
  - School-aged children, adolescents and adults: two doses
- Lab evidence of immunity or lab confirmation of disease
- A healthcare provider’s (nurse, NP, physician, PA):
  - Diagnosis of varicella disease or
  - Verification of history of typical varicella disease
- History of herpes zoster (shingles) based on healthcare provider diagnosis
- Born in the U.S. before 1980 (Unless pregnant or Health Care Personnel)

*Contraindications*
- An anaphylactic reaction to a prior dose of a varicella-containing vaccine
- An anaphylactic reaction to a component of varicella vaccine including gelatin or neomycin
- Pregnant or planning on becoming pregnant in the next 4 weeks (inform girls/women in child-bearing years)
- Persons with immunosuppression due to leukemia, lymphoma, generalized malignancy, immune deficiency disease or immunosuppressive therapy (i.e. chemotherapy, certain medications)

*Precautions*
- Moderate to severe acute illness
- Receipt of blood or a blood product within the last year (wait time varies by the type of blood/product administered)
  - For further information refer to: General Recommendations on Immunization January 28, 2011 (page 39)

*Further Points*
- Varicella-containing vaccines will be shipped directly from Merck with frozen gel packs that are good for up to 72 hours
- Do not transport varicella-containing vaccines on dry ice (-109°F); a type of portable freezer unit must be used
- To best protect susceptible pregnant women and persons with immunosuppression, vaccine should be offered to all household members and close contacts who do not have evidence of immunity* and have no contraindication to vaccination
- Breastfeeding is not a contraindication to varicella vaccination in either the mom or the infant
- Varicella Vaccine Information Statement (VIS), is available at [http://www.immunize.org/vis/](http://www.immunize.org/vis/)

For additional information, refer to VFC Program Resolutions or “Prevention of Varicella, Recommendations of the ACIP” at [http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/recs](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/recs)

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