

Varicella Vaccine Recommendation Statement

Vaccine Advisory Committee

Washington State Department of Health

Final, July 2002

The Washington State Department of Health Vaccine Advisory Committee (VAC) has reviewed the varicella vaccine recommendations of the Committee on Infectious Diseases of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). Based on the proven safety and history of preventing disease, the VAC recommends varicella virus vaccine for the following:

1. Persons <13 years of age

- 12-18 months of age

All children should be routinely vaccinated at 12-18 months of age regardless of a history of varicella. However, vaccination is not necessary for children who have a reliable history of varicella.

- 19 months – 12 years of age

Varicella vaccine is strongly recommended for all susceptible children by their 13th birthday. Prior to the 13th birthday, one dose is sufficient. A routine adolescent visit at 11-12 years of age to review immunization status and administer necessary vaccinations should include varicella vaccine. After 12 years of age, natural varicella is more severe and complications are more frequent.

2. Persons ≥ 13 years of age (Two doses after 12 years of age are recommended.)

- Persons ≥ 13 years of age who have reliable histories of varicella should be considered immune. Those who do not have such histories should be considered susceptible and can be tested to determine immune status or can be vaccinated without testing. Because 71% - 93% of adults who do not have a reliable history of varicella are usually immune, serologic testing before vaccination is likely to be cost-effective in most circumstances, depending on the cost of screening and vaccine.

- Persons without a reliable history of varicella disease or vaccination who are medically at **high risk** and those likely to transmit varicella to others at high risk for complicated disease, such as:

- Health care workers and susceptible family contacts of immunocompromised individuals judged to be at risk for varicella infection;
- Susceptible adults and adolescents who live and work in environments in which there is a high likelihood of transmission of varicella-zoster virus (VZV) such as adults and adolescents living in households with young children, teachers of young children, child care workers, residents and staff in institutional settings; college students, inmates and staff of correction facilities;
- Susceptible women of child bearing age who are not pregnant;
- Susceptible international travelers