



Dear Parent/Guardian,

This letter is to notify you that a case of shingles has been reported and your child may have been exposed.

Shingles is caused by the same virus that causes chickenpox (also known as varicella). In about 15-20% of persons who get chickenpox, the virus will remain in their body in a part of a nerve near the spinal cord. As a person gets older, the virus may become active again and cause a local, painful rash along the path of that nerve. This rash is known as shingles.

Because shingles results from an earlier chickenpox infection becoming reactivated, shingles is not spread from one person to another. However, because the same virus causes both shingles and chickenpox, people with shingles can spread the chickenpox virus. Persons who have not had chickenpox illness or have not received the chickenpox (varicella) vaccine are susceptible to infection with chickenpox when exposed to shingles. With shingles, the virus is usually transmitted by contact with fluid from the rash. Those persons who have had a chickenpox illness or have received the chickenpox (varicella) vaccine are protected against a chickenpox infection from exposure to shingles.

Although chickenpox is usually not a serious illness, children often miss days at school or daycare thereby causing parents to miss work as well. **In some children and certain high-risk individuals, including those with HIV/AIDS, on chemotherapy, or pregnant, chickenpox can cause much more severe illness; leading to hospital stays or even death.**

You should contact your child's physician if the above symptoms are noticed. Good hygiene measures, like frequent hand washing, washing contaminated surfaces and clothing are the **best** way to lower your child's risk and spread of infection. Please notify the school if your child has been diagnosed with shingles.

Charlotte Public Schools and the Barry Eaton Health Department recommend that susceptible individuals contact their regular health care provider and seriously consider getting vaccinated now. Vaccination against chickenpox is safe and greatly reduces both the mild and serious risks of chickenpox and future shingles. It can also stop the spread of the chickenpox virus to others who are at a greater risk of more severe disease.

The classroom is being cleaned and doing what is appropriate to prevent the spread of the disease.

If you have any additional questions please contact your family physician.

Thank you for your cooperation.