

Vaccination is the best protection against varicella and its complications. Varicella, also known as chicken pox, is a highly contagious disease caused by a virus. This virus remains in the organism and can be reactivated years later, causing shingles.

Disease	Signs and symptoms	Possible complications
Varicella	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fever• Varicella blisters (tiny blisters that form a crust and dry up)• Itching	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ear infection• Pneumonia• Infected chicken pox blister (e.g. impetigo)• Serious infection (e.g. flesh eating bacteria)• Encephalitis (brain infection)• Malformations in baby whose mother contracted varicella during pregnancy• Shingles (15 to 30% of cases)• Death

The vaccine

Vaccination is the best protection against varicella and its complications. This vaccine is recommended for everyone aged 1 year and older who is not protected against varicella. People vaccinated against varicella are probably less likely to develop shingles.

Women receiving the vaccine must avoid becoming pregnant in the month after the vaccination.

Symptoms after vaccination

Some symptoms may be caused by the vaccine (e.g. redness at the injection site). Other problems may occur by chance and are not related to the vaccine (e.g. cold, gastro, headache).

Varicella vaccine is safe. In most cases, it does not cause any reaction.

Frequency	Known reactions to this vaccine	What to do
Often (less than 10% of people)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pain and redness at the injection site• Blisters similar to those of varicella (less than 10 blisters) at the injection site or elsewhere on the body; these blisters are not very contagious and clear up quickly	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Apply a cold, damp compress at the injection site.• Cover the blisters. If this is not possible, contacts with premature newborns and people with weakened immune system should be avoided as long as these blisters are present.• Use a medication for fever or discomfort if needed.• Do not give medication containing aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid) to people under age 18 for 6 weeks following their vaccination.• See a doctor if symptoms are severe.

We recommend that you stay at the clinic for at least 15 minutes after vaccination because allergic reactions may occur. If an allergic reaction occurs, the symptoms will appear a few minutes after the vaccination. The person giving the vaccine will be able to treat this reaction immediately.

For any questions, contact the person giving the vaccine, or Info-Santé 8-1-1 or your doctor.