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Media alert from the Media Scanning & Verification Cell, IDSP-NCDC.

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5226	09.04.2019	09.04.2019	**Chennai Tamil Nadu**	www.timesofindia.com/English https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/chennai/as-summer-peaks-chicken-pox-cases-among-kids-go-up/articleshow/68786436.cms

Title:	**As summer peaks, chicken pox cases among kids go up in district Chennai, Tamil Nadu**
Action By CSU, IDSP –NCDC	Information communicated to DSU-**Chennai**, SSU-**Tamil Nadu**

With the mercury rising, at least three children are going to the city hospitals almost every day with symptoms of chicken pox. Doctors say the season for summer diseases has begun.

Pox caused by varicella-zoster virus, is highly contagious. Children between the age of 4 and 8, especially those who aren't vaccinated for the virus, are being brought with blister-like rash, itching, fatigue and high fever.

"Although we advise parents to isolate infected children, many infect others even before the symptoms begin to manifest. It isn't a benign disease," says Kanchi Kamakoti Childs Trust Hospital Medical director Dr S Balasubramanian. "It usually presents as a mild illness, but even among healthy children it can cause complications like bacterial skin infections, bloodstream infections, pneumonia, infection of the brain and even death," he said. Although the vaccine is not a part of the mandatory universal vaccination schedule, doctors recommend two doses of the

vaccine — first to infants between 12 and 15 months old and the second to children of ages four to six.

"Most children who come down with the virus have either skipped both vaccines or haven't had booster doses," said a paediatrician from Sooriya Hospital. "The vaccine has up to 95% protection. If it occurs in children who have been vaccinated, the symptoms are mild," she said

For instance, a day after 6-year-old Mayur Menon was diagnosed with chicken pox, his eight-year-old brother started showing the symptoms. Their mother Deepti Menon said both the kids had taken the first vaccine, but skipped the second.

"They were both treated as out-patients but both of them had high temperature and complained of fatigue," said Menon. Doctors now recommend the vaccine even for those exposed to the virus without vaccination.

The vaccine is ideally administered within three days to either prevent the illness or lessen its severity. "I did not have any second thoughts about it," Menon said. The vaccine cost around Rs 1,600 per dose. As schools close for summer holidays, children are likely to play in the sun which could cause skin infections, fungal diseases and pox. "This is a good time to reinforce healthy and hygienic habits," said

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एक कदम स्वच्छता की ओर