

# Varicella (Chickenpox) Cases in Clark County

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## General Varicella Information

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### Background

The varicella-zoster virus causes the highly contagious disease called Chickenpox. The virus is a member of the herpesvirus group. This disease is common within the United States, but cases are expected to decrease with an increase in immunization. In temperate climates, chickenpox occurs most frequently in winter and early spring.

### Transmission & Risk

Chickenpox is spread when an infected person coughs or sneezes, sending the virus into the air. A susceptible person coming into contact with an infected person's skin lesions or in contact with clothing or linens that may have been soiled with discharge from the infected person's skin lesions may be at risk.

An infected person is able to transmit chickenpox one to two days before onset of rash until all lesions have crusted or scabbed over.

### Symptoms & Complications

The main symptom of chickenpox is an itchy, blister-like rash that occurs on the face, scalp, and trunk. Adults may get one to two days of fever and tiredness before developing the rash. Children will usually have the rash at the same time as the fever and tiredness. The disease is typically more serious in adults than in children.

Symptoms appear 14 to 16 days (10-to-21-day range) after exposure to someone with chickenpox or shingles.

In children, the most common complications are bacterial infections of the skin and soft tissues. In adults, the most common complication is pneumonia. Other complications include cerebellar ataxia, encephalitis and hemorrhagic complications leading to bleeding disorders

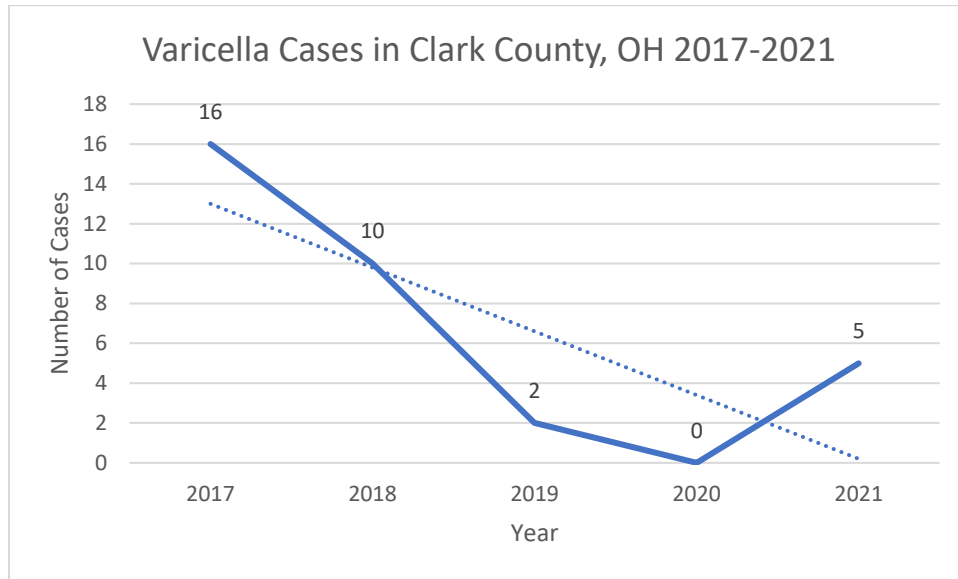
### Testing, Diagnosis, Treatment

There is a treatment for chickenpox called acyclovir for healthy children; however, since chickenpox tends to be mild in children, physicians do not feel it is necessary to prescribe it. A shot of varicella zoster immune globulin (VZIG) may be indicated for some susceptible individuals.

More information can be found here: <https://odh.ohio.gov/know-our-programs/infectious-disease-control-manual/section3/section-3-varicella>

*Clark County Related Discussion*

There has been an overall 68.8% decrease in varicella (chickenpox) cases in Clark County between 2017 and 2021.



*Figure 1 Varicella Cases 2017-2021*

The 0-9 age group makes up 60.6% of all cases between 2017 and 2021. When combined with all school aged children (including 10-19), they make up 78.8% of all cases.

Age Group	Cases
0-9	20
10-19	6
20-29	2
40-49	1
60-69	1
70-79	1
80+	2

*Table 1 Varicella Cases by Age Group*

\*Includes Suspected, Probable and Confirmed Cases.