

Varicella vaccine shortage

Information for prospective employees, contractors, students and volunteers (prospective workers)

This information is for people who are about to start working, volunteering, or studying in Queensland Health healthcare settings.

Current Situation


There's currently a shortage of the varicella (chickenpox) vaccine in the private market. This is expected to last until early 2026. The vaccine supply for the National Immunisation Program is not affected.

Importance of Immunity

If your role involves:

- Direct contact with patients,
- Working in a clinical area, or
- Regular visits to clinical areas

You must show proof that you're protected against varicella before you start working for Queensland Health.

 **For information** about varicella (chickenpox) including signs and symptoms, treatment, prevention and pregnancy please see: [Chickenpox \(varicella\) | Health and wellbeing | Queensland Government](#)

Required Actions

You can provide any one of the following:

- A record showing you've had a complete or partial course of varicella-containing vaccine,
- A blood test result showing immunity to varicella (positive IgG),
- A letter from a doctor confirming you've had chickenpox or shingles.
- If you don't have proof of vaccination, you should get a blood test to check for immunity.

If you can't provide any of the above, your employer or education provider can apply for an exemption. This must be approved by the Health Service Chief Executive.

Steps Before Exemption Approval

The hospital or health service must:

- Do a risk assessment to see how likely you are to catch or spread varicella,
- Make staffing and safety plans based on that risk,
- Give you information about the risks, safety procedures, and what to do if you're exposed.

Note: Exemptions will only last until the vaccine shortage ends.

Health and Safety Reminder

Queensland Health wants to keep both workers and patients safe. Make sure you know your immune status and discuss any concerns with your employer or education provider.