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Varicella Vaccine Pregnancy Registry

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Varivax (Merck & Co, Inc, West Point, PA), a live attenuated virus vaccine for preventing chickenpox, recently has been licensed for children aged >12 months. Adults without a reliable history of chickenpox also may receive the vaccine. However, because no data exist on the effects of Varivax on fetal development and because natural varicella infection can cause a complex of congenital anomalies (ie, congenital varicella syndrome), the package circular states that the vaccine should not be administered during pregnancy and that pregnancy should be avoided for 3 months after vaccination.

Merck & Co, Inc, in collaboration with the CDC, has established a registry to follow the outcomes of pregnancy when women are vaccinated within 3 months before pregnancy or at any time during pregnancy. Patients and healthcare providers should report any vaccination with Varivax during this period to the registry (telephone 800-986-8999 or mail to Merck Research Laboratories, Worldwide Product Safety and Epidemiology, BLA-31, West Point, PA 19486). Questions regarding the registry should be directed to Dr. Jeanne Manson, 610-397-7290 (call collect), or fax to 610-397-2328. An annual report will be sent to healthcare providers participating in the registry.

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