**Contraindications**

The vaccine should not be given to:

- immunosuppressed patients. For patients who require protection against chickenpox, seek advice from a specialist
- women who are pregnant. Pregnancy should be avoided for three months following the last dose of varicella vaccine (see below)
- women who are pregnant. Pregnancy should be avoided for one month following the last dose of varicella vaccine (see below)


**Precautions**

Unless protection is needed urgently, immunisation should be postponed in acutely unwell individuals until they have recovered fully. This is to avoid confusing the differential diagnosis of any acute illness by wrongly attributing any sign or symptoms to the adverse effects of the vaccine.

**Pregnancy and breast-feeding**

Women who are pregnant should not receive varicella vaccine and pregnancy should be avoided for three months following the last dose.

Women who are pregnant should not receive varicella vaccine and pregnancy should be avoided for one month following the last dose.
The flow chart the box which reads:

“Informed consent for vaccination, advice to avoid salicylates for six weeks, pregnancy for three months, and to consult occupational health department if post-vaccine rash appears”

Figure 34.1 Procedure for vaccinating healthcare workers
Informed consent for vaccination, advice to avoid salicylates for six weeks, pregnancy for one month, and to consult occupational health department if post-vaccine rash appears

**Figure 34.1 Procedure for vaccinating healthcare workers**

1. **Definite history of VZ virus infection?**
   - No
     - VZ virus antibody test
       - Positive
         - Consider immune
       - Negative
         - Evaluate for VZ virus vaccine
           - Contraindication (immunocompromised (p 430), pregnant (p 434))
             - VZIG prophylaxis if significant exposure to VZ virus
           - Informed consent for vaccination, advice to avoid salicylates for six weeks, pregnancy for one month, and to consult occupational health department if post-vaccine rash appears
             - First dose then second dose four to eight weeks later
               - Outcome
                 - No VZ virus compatible rash; may continue working
                 - Generalised rash – exclude from patient contact until lesions crusted
                   - Localised rash – cover lesions and allow to work (those working in close contact with high-risk patients should be reviewed on a case-by-case basis)