

*Varicella-Zoster Virus  
Vaccination & Pregnancy*

---

**Atousa Karimi, M.D.**

**Fellowship of Infertility**

**Varicella–zoster virus (VZV) is a double-stranded DNA herpesvirus acquired predominately during childhood, and 90 percent of adults have serological evidence of immunity.**

**The incidence of adult varicella declined by 82 percent after the introduction of varicella vaccination, and this has resulted in a drop in maternal and fetal varicella rates (ACOG).**

- ❑ Primary infection—*varicella* or *chickenpox*—is transmitted by direct contact with an infected individual, although respiratory transmission has been reported.**
- ❑ The incubation period is 10 to 21 days, and a nonimmune woman has a 60- to 95% risk of becoming infected after exposure.**
- ❑ Primary varicella presents with a 1- to 2-day flulike prodrome, which is followed by pruritic vesicular lesions that crust after 3 to 7 days.**
- ❑ Infection tends to be more severe in adults .**

- ❑ Affected patients are then contagious from 1 day **before** the onset of the rash until the lesions become crusted.
- ❑ Mortality is predominately due to VZV **pneumonia**, which is thought to be more severe during **adulthood** and particularly in **pregnancy**.
- ❑ Although the incidence was once thought to be higher, only **2 to 5 %** of infected pregnant women develop pneumonitis.
- ❑ Risk factors for VZV pneumonia include **smoking** and having more than **100** cutaneous lesions.
- ❑ Maternal **mortality** rates with pneumonia have decreased to **1 to 2%**.

**Symptoms of VZV pneumonia usually appear 3 to 5 days into the course of illness.**

**Characteristic are:**

- **Fever**
- **Tachypnea**
- **Dry cough**
- **Dyspnea**
- **Pleuritic pain.**
- **Nodular infiltrates are similar to other viral pneumonias**

**Although resolution of pneumonitis parallels that of skin lesions, fever and compromised pulmonary function may persist for **weeks**.**

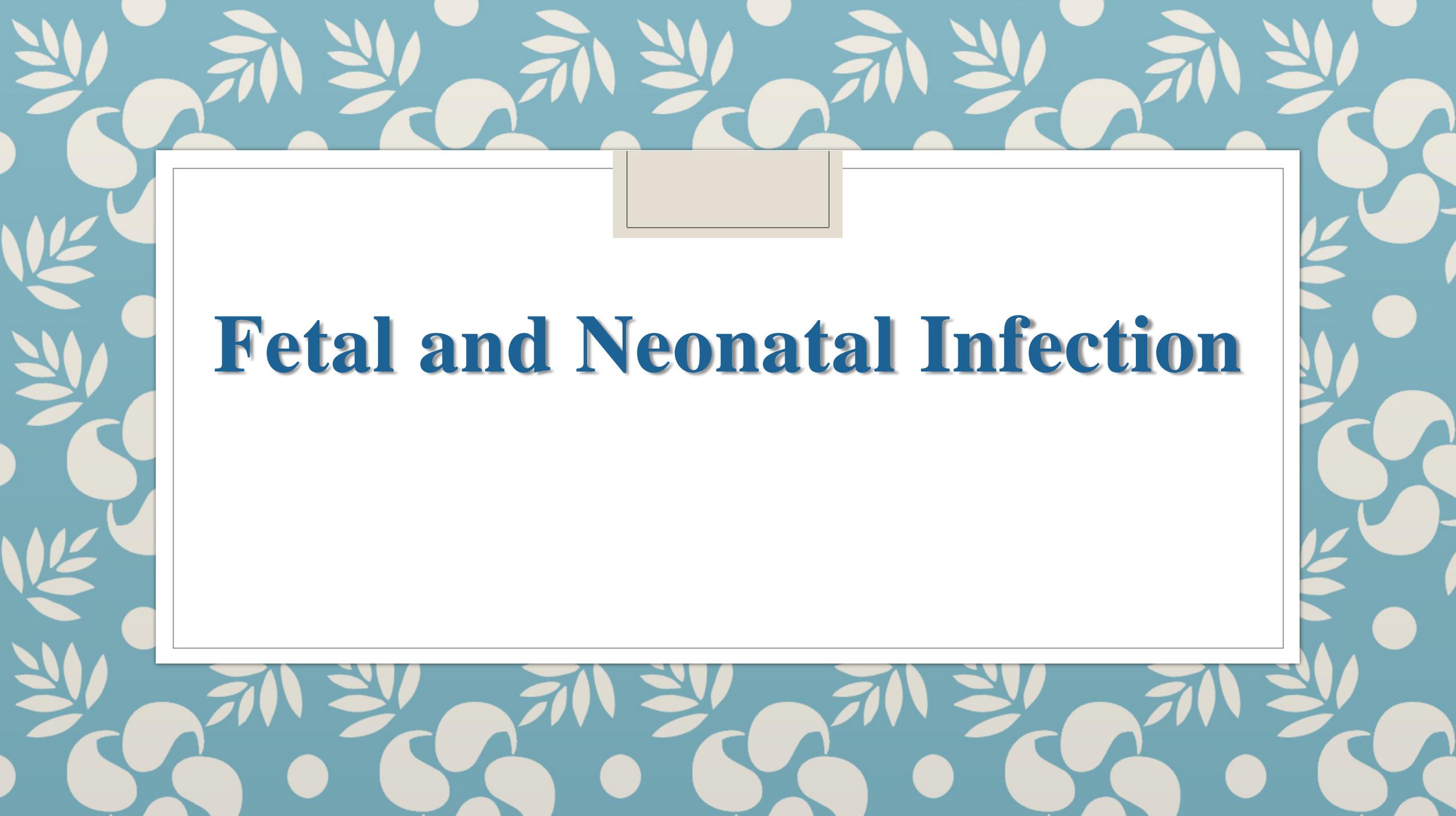
**If primary varicella is reactivated years later, it causes herpes zoster or shingles.**

**This presents as a unilateral dermatomal vesicular eruption associated with **severe** pain.**

**Zoster does not appear to be more frequent or severe in pregnant women.**

**Congenital varicella syndrome rarely develops in cases of maternal herpes zoster.**

**Zoster is contagious if blisters are broken, although less so than with primary varicella.**



# **Fetal and Neonatal Infection**

In women with varicella during the **first half** of pregnancy , the fetus may develop ***congenital varicella syndrome***. Some features include:

- **Chorioretinitis**
- **Microphthalmia**
- **Cerebral cortical atrophy**
- **Growth restriction**
- **Hydronephrosis**
- **Limb hypoplasia**
- **Cicatricial skin lesions**

**1373 pregnant women with varicella were evaluated :**

**When maternal infection developed before 13 weeks, only two of 472 pregnancies—0.4 %—had neonates with congenital varicella syndrome.**

**The **highest risk** was between **13 and 20** weeks, during which time seven of 351 exposed fetuses—2 %—had evidence of congenital varicella.**

**After 20 weeks' gestation, the researchers found no clinical evidence of congenital infection.**



**Atrophy of the lower extremity with bony defects and scarring in a fetus infected during the first trimester by varicella.**

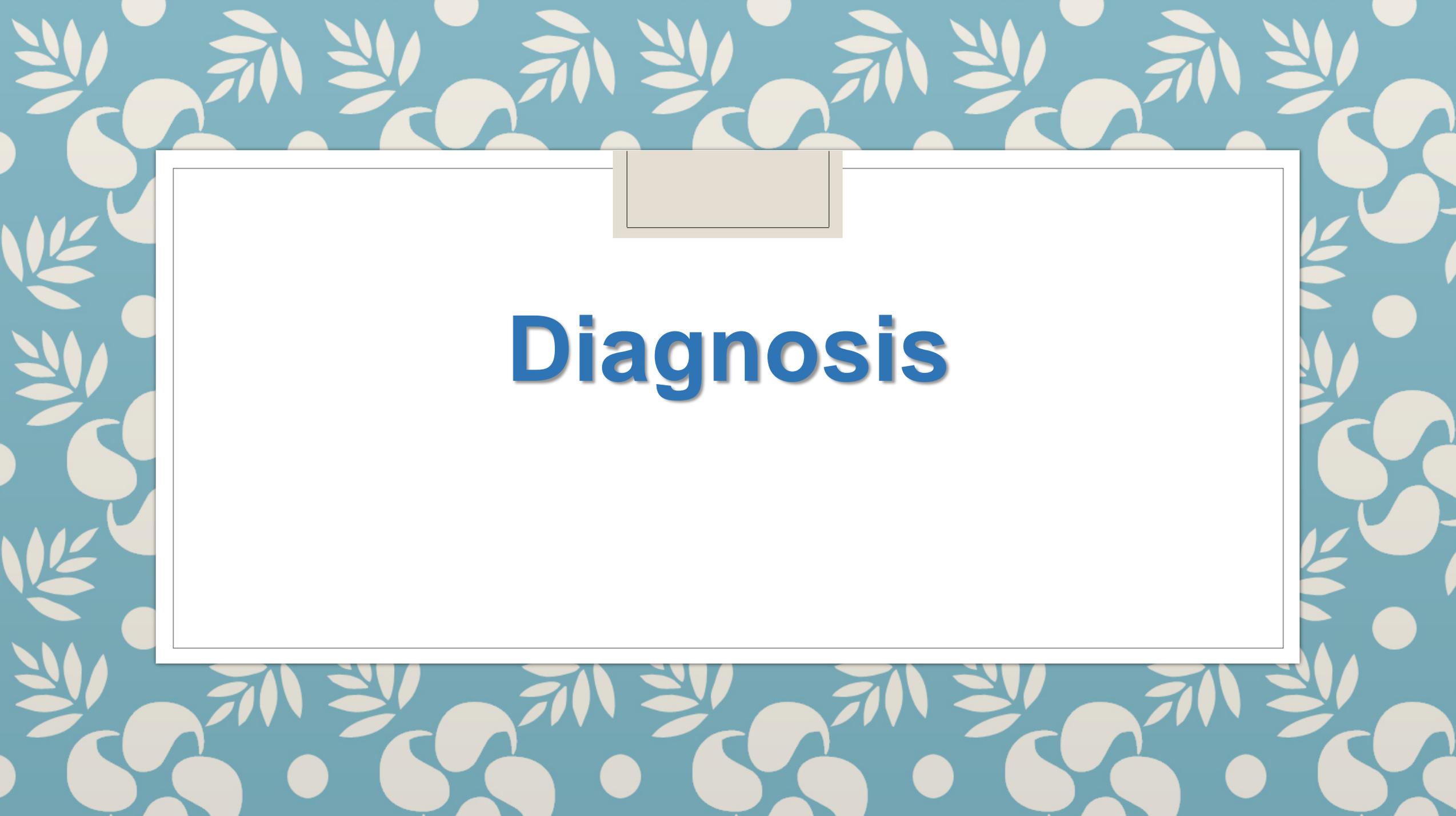
**(Reproduced with permission from Paryani SG, Arvin AM: Intrauterine infection with varicella zoster virus after maternal varicella).**

**Sporadic reports have described CNS abnormalities and skin lesions in fetuses who developed congenital varicella in weeks 21 to 28 of gestation.**

**If the fetus or neonate is exposed to active infection just before or during delivery, and therefore before maternal antibody has been formed, the newborn faces a serious threat.**

**Attack rates range from 25 to 50 %, and mortality rates approach 30 %. In some instances, neonates develop disseminated visceral and CNS disease , which is commonly fatal.**

**For this reason , varicella-zoster immune globulin (VZIG) should be administered to neonates born to mothers who have clinical evidence of varicella **5 days before** and up to **2 days after** delivery.**



# Diagnosis

**Maternal varicella is usually diagnosed clinically.**

**Infection may be confirmed by NAAT of vesicular fluid, which is very sensitive.**

**The virus may also be isolated by scraping the vesicle base during primary infection and performing a Tzanck smear, tissue culture, or direct fluorescent antibody testing.**

**Congenital varicella may be diagnosed using NAAT analysis of amniotic fluid, although a positive result does not correlate well with the development of congenital infection .**

**A detailed anatomical sonographic evaluation performed at least 5 weeks after maternal infection may disclose abnormalities, but the sensitivity is low.**



# **Management**

**Exposed gravidas with a negative history for chickenpox should undergo VZV serological testing.**

**At least 70 percent of these women will be seropositive, and thus immune.**

**Exposed pregnant women who are susceptible (seronegative) should be given [varicella-zoster immune globulin \(VariZIG\)](#).**

**Although best given within 96 hours of exposure, its use is approved for up to 10 days to prevent or attenuate varicella infection ([Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)).**

**Passive immunization appears to be highly effective.**

**In women with known history of varicella, VariZIG is not indicated.**

**Any patient diagnosed with primary varicella infection or herpes zoster should be isolated from pregnant women.**

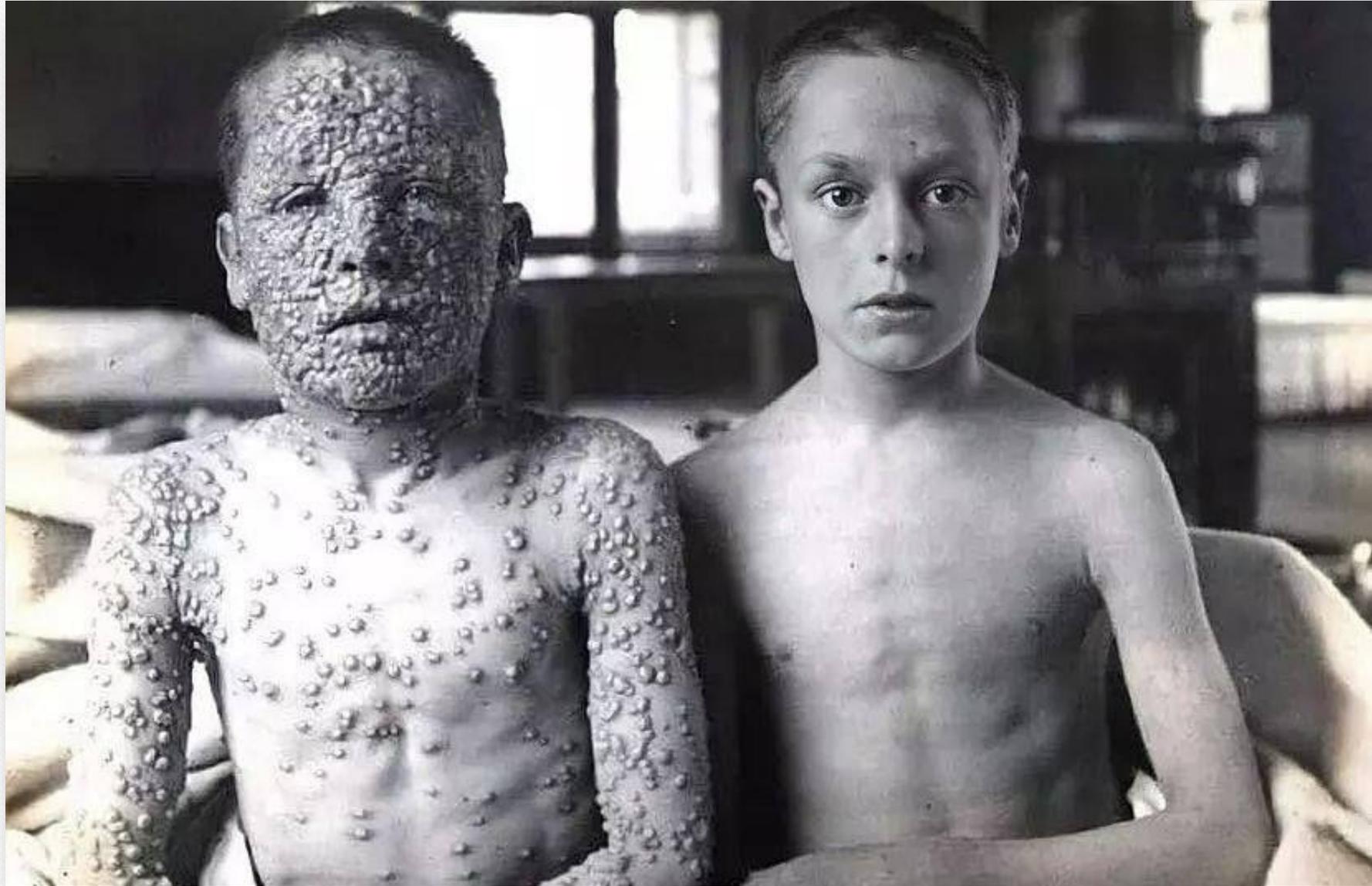
**Because VZV pneumonia often presents with few symptoms, a chest radiograph is recommended by many.**

**Most women require only supportive care , but those who require intravenous (IV) fluids and especially those with pneumonia are hospitalized.**

**IV acyclovir therapy is given to women requiring hospitalization—500 mg/m<sup>2</sup> or 10 to 15 mg/kg every 8 hours.**



# **Vaccination**



An attenuated live-virus vaccine is recommended for **non**pregnant adolescents and **adults** with no history of varicella.

Two doses of *Varivax* are given 4 to 8 weeks apart, and the seroconversion rate is 98 % .

Importantly, vaccine-induced immunity diminishes over time, and the breakthrough infection rate approximates 5 % at 10 years.

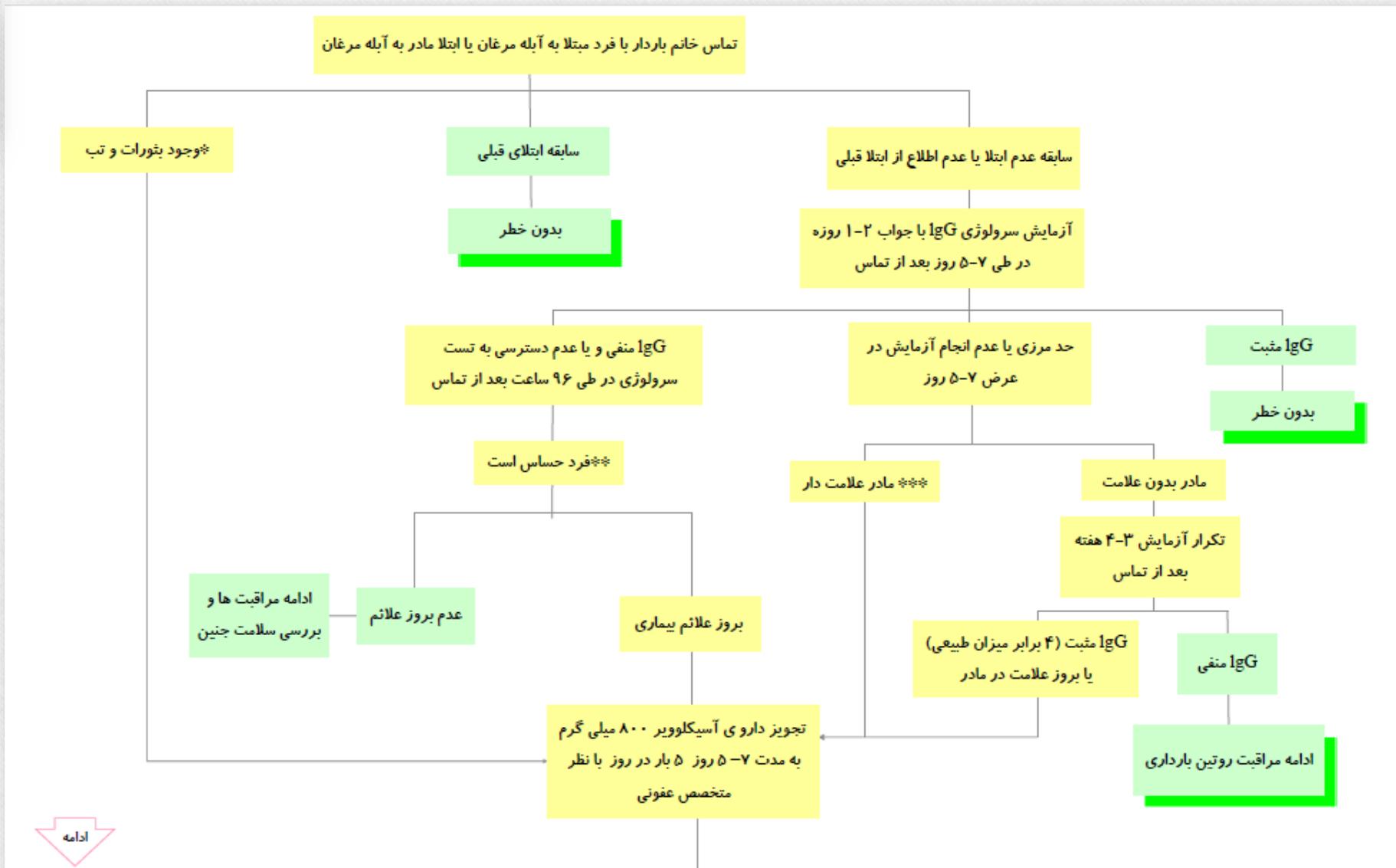
The vaccine is not recommended for pregnant women or for those who may become pregnant within a **month** following each vaccine dose.

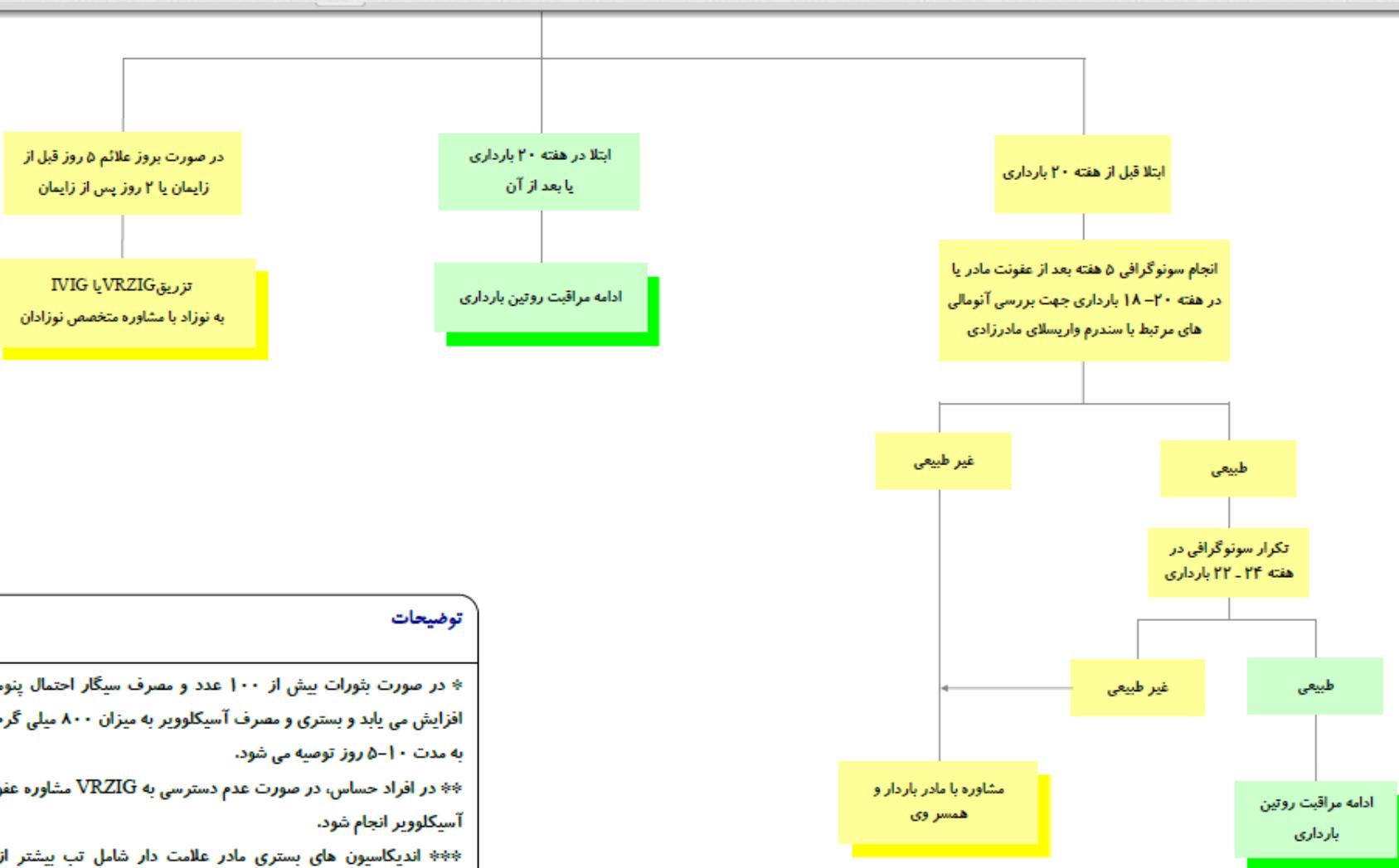
That said, a registry of more than 1000 vaccine exposed pregnancies reports no cases of congenital varicella syndrome or other associated congenital malformations.

The attenuated vaccine virus is **not** secreted in breast milk. Thus, postpartum vaccination should not be delayed because of breastfeeding (American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists).



# Summary





#### توضیحات

\* در صورت بتورات بیش از ۱۰۰ عدد و مصرف سیگار احتمال پنومونی واریسلایی افزایش می یابد و بستری و مصرف آسیکلوویر به میزان ۸۰۰ میلی گرم سه بار در روز به مدت ۱۰-۵ روز توصیه می شود.

\*\* در افراد حساس، در صورت عدم دسترسی به VRZIG مشاوره عفونی برای شروع آسیکلوویر انجام شود.

\*\*\* اندیکاسیون های بستری مادر علامت دار شامل تب بیشتر از ۳۸/۵ درجه، پنومونی، آنسفالیت، دردهای زایمان زودرس.



بسیار  
سپاس گزارم



پایزتون زیبا