

CHICKENPOX



CHICKENPOX IS...

- A common childhood illness that most children catch.¹
- Medically known as varicella.¹
- Caused by the varicella zoster virus.
- Quickly spreads through coughs and sneezes of someone who is infected.²
- Most common in children from 2-8 years.¹
- Highly infectious.³

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

- Rash of red spots, that become intensely itchy after 12-14 hours and turns into a fluid filled blister that crusts over and falls off naturally, 1 – 2 weeks later.²
- The spots are most likely to appear on the face, ears, scalp, arms, under arms, legs, chest, and stomach.²
- Most children recover with no lasting effects.²
- Please consult a doctor if the skin surrounding the blisters become red and painful or if your child starts to get pain in the chest or have difficulty breathing.²

90 % of adults are immune to the condition because they had it before.²

DID YOU KNOW?

...However, the virus that causes chickenpox remains dormant in your body nerve tissue and can return later in life as an illness called shingles.²

WHO IS AT SERIOUS RISK?

Pregnant women:

- Can cause miscarriage, congenital varicella syndrome/ neonatal varicella.
- If a pregnant woman contracts chickenpox 7 days before or after giving birth, it can lead to serious type of chicken pox in the newborn baby and can be fatal.²

Others at risk:

- People with a weak immune system.²
- Adults with no previous exposure to the virus.²
- Newborn babies.²



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MANAGEMENT OF CHICKENPOX

Although chickenpox is not serious for children, in most cases, it can be uncomfortable and disruptive to both you and your child's daily routine.²

Chickenpox is very contagious and therefore public settings should be avoided. The child should stay at home until the blister has burst and crusted over.¹ Avoid scratching the blister and keep fingernails trimmed short to prevent skin infections. Incubation period for varicella from the time of contact to rash is generally 14 -16 days with a range of 10 – 21 days.¹

Because chickenpox is a virus, it cannot be treated with antibiotics. Treatment is about controlling the itching from the rash and other symptoms related to the viral illness.³ Speak to your HCP about the creams and medications that are available.

DID YOU KNOW

Chickenpox can cause serious complications, such as: **bacterial skin infections; encephalitis, viral pneumonia & cerebellar ataxia.**³

PREVENTION

- Chickenpox is a vaccine preventable disease.¹ The vaccine is usually given to children as part of their normal routine vaccination.³
- Varicella vaccines are highly immunogenic, efficacious and safe in preventing varicella disease.¹
- Vaccination demonstrates a significant and sustained decrease in the burden of varicella.¹
- If a vaccinated person does get chickenpox, the symptoms are usually milder with fewer or no blisters (they may have just red spots) and mild or no fever.⁴

Please note: This is an education information leaflet only and should not be used for diagnosis. For more information on Chickenpox, consult your healthcare professional.

References

1. ECDC GUIDANCE. Varicella vaccination in the European Union. Available from: <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/sites/portal/files/media/en/publications/Publications/Varicella-Guidance-2015.pdf>. Accessed 09 April 2020.
2. NHS inform. Chickenpox. Available from: <https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/Chickenpox>. Accessed 09 April 2020.
3. The Royal Children's hospital Melbourne. Chickenpox. Available from: https://www.rch.org.au/kidsinfo/fact_sheets/Chickenpox_Varicella/ Accessed 09 April 2020.
4. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Chickenpox(varicella) : Prevention and treatment. <https://www.cdc.gov/Chickenpox/about/prevention-treatment.html>. Accessed 09 April 2020



Chickenpox occurs in approx. 3 in every 1 000 pregnancies and can cause small but significant risk for the pregnant woman and her baby.²

DID YOU KNOW ?

