



CHICKENPOX (Varicella)

What is VARICELLA or CHICKENPOX?

Chickenpox is a very contagious infection caused by the varicella-zoster virus (VZV). It usually begins with a mild fever and an itchy rash. The rash starts as crops of small, red bumps, which become blisterly, oozy, and then crust over.

Who gets chickenpox?

Anyone who has never had chickenpox or has not been vaccinated can get the disease. Most people who get the chickenpox vaccine will not get chickenpox. If someone who is vaccinated does get chickenpox, it is usually very mild.

How is chickenpox spread?

Chickenpox is spread through exposure to discharges from the nose or throat or contact with the lesions of someone with chickenpox. This can occur when an infected person coughs or sneezes and another person inhales the droplets or directly touches the lesions. Chickenpox is also spread by coming in contact with clothing or articles that are soiled with drainage from the lesions.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms include a mild fever, tiredness; and an itchy, blister-like rash that starts on the trunk and face, but can spread over the entire body.

How soon do symptoms appear?

It may take as long as two to three weeks for a person to notice the symptoms after being exposed.

How long is a person able to spread chickenpox?

Persons with chickenpox can spread the virus 1-2 days **before** the rash appears until the entire rash is dried and crusted.

How is it chickenpox treated?

Chickenpox is generally not a serious disease and requires no specific treatment. The symptoms can be treated with plenty of fluids, rest, fever control, and anti-itching medicines and lotions. Children with chickenpox should not receive aspirin because of the possibility of causing Reye Syndrome.