

CHICKENPOX

- 1. Definition:** Chickenpox is a viral infection which causes blister-like sores (called vesicles) on the body, and to a lesser extent, on the scalp and inside the mouth. However, the rash begins usually on the upper chest, back, and neck with a few red spots, which then become blisters. Fortunately, most children do not become extremely ill and usually begin to feel better in three to four days. Children with chickenpox are contagious for about seven days, usually from the day before the pox appear until all the sores are dried up and crusted over. Children who have been vaccinated rarely can acquire the disease, but usually have a much milder illness
- 2. Exposure to Chickenpox:** The incubation time for chickenpox (the time interval from when the child is first exposed to when the child begins to break out) is approximately 14 days (as early as 7 days and as late as 20 days after contact). Therefore, if there are siblings at home that have not had chickenpox, you can generally plan on them becoming ill in about two weeks. Chickenpox is very contagious and is transmitted through the respiratory system. The contact has to be directly with someone who has fresh chickenpox sores. For instance, a parent who has already had chickenpox cannot carry on their clothes home to their child.
- 3. Treatment:** Chickenpox symptoms can be very mild, and if your child shows no discomfort, then no treatment is necessary. If there is itching, the best treatments are Benadryl, cool baking soda baths (one box soda/tub full), Aveeno (oatmeal) baths, and Calamine lotion. If there is fever or discomfort, give Tylenol (acetaminophen) only. Never use aspirin or Ibuprofen (Advil or Motrin).

Benadryl Elixir Dosages:

Under 20 lbs.	½ tsp., every 6 hours as needed
20-40 lbs.	1 tsp., every 6 hours as needed
Over 40 lbs.	2 tsp., every 6 hours as needed

- 4.** To prevent the sores from becoming infected with bacteria, trim the child's fingernails short. Also, wash his/her hands with antibacterial soap (such as Dial or Safeguard) frequently during the day. For young babies who are itching badly, you may want to cover their hands with cotton socks.
- 5.** We recommend, and schools now require, that children receive the varicella vaccine. Children who have received the varicella vaccine can get varicella, but it will usually be a milder case. There is a vaccine given at 12 months of age and a booster at four years old.
- 6.** Internet resource: www.cdc.gov/nip/diseases/varicella.htm

7. Call our office during regular hours if:

- a.** The scabs turn from brown to gold or get any pus under them, or if there are large areas of redness around the scabs. This may mean the chickenpox has become infected with bacteria (germs) and an antibiotic medicine is needed.
- b.** You suspect your child has chicken pox. Due to the contagiousness of this disease, we like to confirm the diagnosis.

8. Call our office urgently if:

- a.** Your child vomits several times, or acts funny, or doesn't seem to know you.
- b.** Your child is taking prednisone or other steroid medication.