

WHAT CAN I DO IF I HAVE CHICKENPOX ?

- Ointments and oral medications are available that reduce the symptoms, severity and duration of the infection. You should discuss this with your doctor
- Avoid contact with newborns and people with weakened immune systems until you are no longer infectious
- Wear loose clothing. Natural fibers (e.g. cotton) are better than artificial fibers
- Take cool baths
- Avoid perfumed soaps
- Keep the rash clean and dry
- Rest, drink fluids and eat well
- Do not touch or scratch the rash. Scratching can cause infection and delay healing and leave scars
- Always remember to wash your hands if you touch the blisters

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF CHICKENPOX?

- Visitors should know their chickenpox status, and if unsure check with their Doctor before visiting
- Children now receive a chickenpox vaccine as part of their routine immunization

HAND HYGIENE

Special care must be paid to **hand hygiene** as it is the best way to prevent the spread of germs. **Good hand hygiene includes:**

Alcohol-Based Hand Rub

- Apply to palm of one hand
- Rub hands together, covering all of hands and fingers
- Rub until hands feel dry
- If hands are visibly dirty you must wash them before using Alcohol Based Hand Rub

Hand Washing

- Use warm running water and soap
- Spend at least **15-30** seconds lathering and washing hands
- Rub hands together, paying attention to finger tips, around rings and thumbs
- Rinse thoroughly
- Dry with paper towel and turn off tap with paper towel
- Dispose of paper towel in the garbage

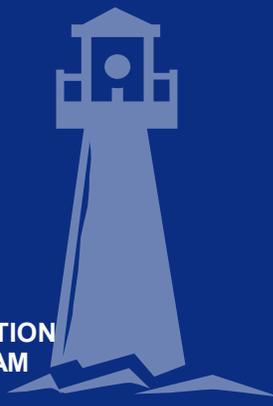
IT'S OK TO ASK NURSES, DOCTORS AND OTHER HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS IF THEY HAVE CLEANED THEIR HANDS

REMINDE VISITORS TO CLEAN THEIR HANDS

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CHICKENPOX (VARICELLA ZOSTER VIRUS)

*Information for Patients,
Residents, Families & Visitors*



INFECTION PREVENTION
& CONTROL PROGRAM

WHAT IS CHICKENPOX ?

- Chickenpox is an infection caused by the **varicella zoster virus (VZV)** a highly contagious virus.

HOW IS THE VIRUS SPREAD?

- The virus is spread in the air by an infected person coughing or sneezing
- It can also be spread in fluid from the chickenpox blisters or in the saliva of a person with chickenpox
- A pregnant women with chickenpox can also pass it to her baby before birth
- A person with chickenpox can spread the virus up to 1-2 days before the rash appears & until all the blisters are crusted

WHO CAN GET CHICKENPOX?

- Anyone who has never had Chickenpox may get chickenpox
- Some vaccinated people may still get chickenpox but they usually have a very mild case
- If you have never had chickenpox you can develop chickenpox if you come in direct contact with a person who has shingles blisters as it is caused by the same virus

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF CHICKENPOX ?

- The first symptom is fever
- After few days, an itchy rash appears
- The spots will appear to blister (these are known as vesicles). The blisters are filled with a clear fluid which contains the chickenpox virus
- The blisters will dry out and crust over in a few days. New blisters will appear for about a week
- The rash usually affects the face, scalp and trunk of the body

CAN CHICKENPOX CAUSE COMPLICATIONS?

- In most cases chickenpox is a mild illness
- Newborns and people with weakened immune symptoms are at risk for more serious complications
- These complications can include pneumonia, encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) and bacterial skin infections from scratching
- **Reye syndrome** - this is an unusual severe complication of chickenpox linked to children who take Aspirin or Aspirin containing products. These products should **never** be given to children under 18 with chickenpox

WHAT WILL HAPPEN WHILE IN HOSPITAL?

Special precautions will be taken while you are infectious.

- An Airborne Precautions sign will be posted
- The door to your room **must** remain closed
- You will need to stay in your room until the blisters are dry and crusted
- If it is necessary to leave your room for medical procedures you will be required to wear a surgical mask at all times
- Staff will wear gown/gloves when providing direct care
- If it is necessary for someone who has never had chickenpox to enter your room they must wear a special mask known as an N95

If wearing an N95 Mask:

- **BEFORE** entering the room put on and fit check your N95 mask
- **AFTER** leaving room remove mask. Dispose of mask in regular garbage and clean your hands.