



HAND HYGIENE

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 physician.
- Avoid contact with newborns, children less than 1 years old, and individuals with a weakened immune system 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, 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 physician before visiting.
- Beginning at age 1, children now receive a chickenpox vaccine as part of their routine immunization.

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

1. Apply to palm of one hand.
2. Rub hands together, covering all of hands and fingers.
3. Rub until hands feel dry.

Hand Washing

1. Remove all jewelry.
2. Use warm running water and soap.
3. Spend at least **15-30** seconds lathering and washing hands.
4. Rub hands together, paying attention to fingertips, between the fingers, and thumbs.
5. Rinse thoroughly.
6. Dry with paper towel and turn off tap with paper towel.
7. 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 WASH THEIR HANDS.

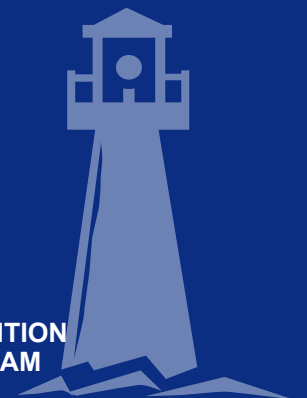
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CHICKENPOX (VARICELLA ZOSTER VIRUS)

Information for Clients, Residents, Families, and Visitors

INFECTION PREVENTION
& CONTROL PROGRAM
www.easternhealth.ca



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 via 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.
- An individual 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 individuals 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 an individual who has shingles as it is caused by the same virus.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF CHICKENPOX ?

- The first symptom is fever which may be followed by headache, runny nose, and tiredness.
- After few days, an itchy rash appears usually on the face, scalp, and trunk of the body.
- The spots will appear to blister (these are known as vesicles). The blisters are filled with a clear fluid which contains the chickenpox virus.
- Symptoms appear 10-21 days following contact with chickenpox and can last about 2 weeks.
- Once the blisters have dried and crusted, you are no longer contagious.

CAN CHICKENPOX CAUSE COMPLICATIONS?

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

WHAT TO EXPECT WHILE IN HOSPITAL:

Special precautions will be taken while you are infectious.

- An Airborne Precautions sign will be posted on your door.
- 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 and gloves and 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.

N95 MASK:

- Discuss with unit nurse before entering the room.
- Before entering the room, clean your hands and fit check your N95 mask.
- After leaving the room, clean your hands, then remove your mask and clean your hands again.