



Chickenpox

Chickenpox is a viral illness. It is a common illness for children that causes a rash. It may be prevented by vaccination.

If you think your child has chickenpox:

- Tell your childcare provider or call the school.
- Keep your child home from childcare and school until all blisters have dried into scabs. This is usually by day 6 after the rash began. Even if your child previously had the chickenpox vaccine, they need to stay home if they have chickenpox.
- **Do not give aspirin or salicylate-containing medicine to anyone under 18 years of age.**
- For more information, call Hennepin County-Epidemiology at 612-543-5230 or your local health department.

Parent/Guardian information

Symptoms

Your child will have a rash that begins as red bumps. The bumps will become fluid-filled blisters and then form scabs. Your child may also have a fever.

If your child is infected, it may take 10-21 days for symptoms to begin.

Spread

- By touching the blister fluid or secretions from the nose or mouth of a person with chickenpox.
- By coughing or sneezing.

Contagious period

From 1 to 2 days before the rash begins until all blisters have become scabs. Scabs usually form within 6 days.

Call your health care provider

- If someone in your home develops a rash with fever. Your doctor will decide if treatment is needed. Do not go to a health care facility without calling first. You will be separated from others to prevent the spread of illness.
- If someone in your home has been exposed to chickenpox and has not had chickenpox disease or vaccine in the past. This is especially important for those who are pregnant or immune compromised.

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Prevention

- In Minnesota, all children 15 months and older attending childcare or school must be vaccinated with varicella vaccine, have a history of disease, or have a legal exemption. Children should get two doses of the vaccination: one at 12 to 15 months old and another at 4 to 6 years old.
- Cover nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing by using a tissue or your sleeve. Dispose of used tissues in the trash.
- Wash hands often, but especially after touching anything that could be contaminated with secretions from the nose and mouth, or fluid from the blisters. Your child may need help with handwashing.
- Clean and disinfect any objects or surfaces that come in contact with secretions from the nose or mouth.

For more information, call Hennepin County-Epidemiology at 612-543-5230 or call your local health department.

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