

Fast Facts

Chickenpox

- An infection that is caused by a virus, varicella-zoster
- Generally, a mild disease, but is highly contagious
- Spread through coming into contact with the rash or when an infected person coughs or sneezes and someone else inhales those droplets
- Symptoms usually begin 10 – 21 days after exposure and last about 5 – 10 days
- Can spread the virus to others starting 48 hours before the rash appears and continue spreading it until all the blisters have crusted over
- Can be severe with the rash covering the person's entire body, including in the throat, eyes and mucous membranes of the urethra, anus and vagina
- Can cause complications, like dehydration, pneumonia, encephalitis (inflammation of the brain), toxic shock syndrome, Reye's syndrome (can occur if children under 16 take aspirin), bacterial infections of the skin/soft tissues/bones/joints/bloodstream and death
- Some individuals are at a higher risk for developing complications, such as newborns/infants whose mothers never had chickenpox or the vaccine, pregnant women who haven't had the chickenpox, smokers, those with weakened immune systems and those who uses steroid medications long-term

<i>Symptoms</i>	<i>Treatment</i>	<i>Prevention</i>
<p><i>Itchy, blister rash:</i> Three phases: -First is raised pink/red bumps, which appear over several days -Second is the formation of small, fluid-filled blisters that form in roughly one day and break open and leak -Third is when the blisters crust and scab over. After this happens, it takes several days for them to heal</p> <p><i>Note:</i> Since new bumps will keep appearing for several days, the person will be experiencing all three stages at once.</p> <p><i>Other:</i> -Fever -Loss of appetite -Headache -Tiredness</p>	<p>Goal: To provide relief of symptoms</p> <p>-Avoid scratching by putting gloves on the child's hands (especially at night), trim their fingernails and find ways to help relieve the itching</p> <p><i>Relieve itching:</i> -Take a cool bath with baking soda, aluminum acetate, uncooked oatmeal or colloidal oatmeal in it -Apply calamine lotion to the spots -If child has lesions in their mouth, offer them foods that are bland and soft -Use over-the-counter antihistamines, such as diphenhydramine -For the fever, use acetaminophen (don't use aspirin or ibuprofen without talking to your child's doctor first)</p> <p><i>Note:</i> -If your child's fever doesn't go away after four days or at any point</p>	<p><i>Get vaccine:</i> -Given in two doses with the first being between 12 -15 months and the second between 4 – 6 years -If you haven't been vaccinated or exposed to virus, you should receive two catch-up doses (especially important for women of childbearing age)</p> <p><i>Note:</i> -You shouldn't receive the vaccine if your pregnant, have a weak immune system or are allergic to gelatin or neomycin (antibiotic)</p>

	<p>is higher than 102°F, call their doctor</p> <p>For individuals who are at high risk of complications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Antiviral medications, like acyclovir, or immune globulin intravenous (must be given within 24 hours of the rash's appearance) -Get chickenpox vaccine 	
--	---	--

Shingles: If you've had chickenpox, you're at risk of developing a complication later in life called shingles. After you've recovered from a chickenpox infection, the varicella-zoster virus remains in your nerve cells until something reactivates it. When this happens, it reappears on your skin in a painful-cluster of blisters. This is more likely to occur in older adults and those with weakened immune systems. The blisters don't usually last long, but the pain that's associated with them often does. This is known as postherpetic neuralgia and, for some, it's very intense. There are two vaccines available to reduce the chances of it occurring. Zostavax is for those over the age of 60. Shingrix can be taken by anyone over the age of 50 and who have already received Zostavax.

Pregnancy: Due to the serious complications for the unborn child associated with chickenpox infections in the mother during pregnancy, if you're planning on becoming pregnant, talk to your doctor about making sure you're up-to-date on all of your vaccinations.

©2020 Demystifying Your Health. All rights reserved.

Demystifying Your Health does not provide medical advice, diagnosis or treatment.

Copyrighted Material Demystifying Your Health