



# Chickenpox (Varicella)

## Parent Resource Template

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### DEFINITION

- A disease caused by the varicella zoster virus
- The same virus also causes shingles
- People who have never had chickenpox or received the chickenpox vaccine can get chickenpox from people with chickenpox or shingles

### HOW IT IS SPREAD

- Breathing in tiny droplets that get into the air when someone who has chickenpox breathes, talks, coughs, or sneezes
- Contact with the blisters
- Students are contagious 1 to 2 days **before** the rash appears and remain contagious until all the blisters have formed scabs (usually in 5-7 days)
- Rarely, students can get chickenpox after getting the vaccine, but it is usually milder, and the rash may not evolve into blisters

### SYMPTOMS

- An itchy rash that turns into fluid-filled blisters
- Rash appears 10-21 days after exposure
- Rash may first show up on the face, chest, and back and may spread to the inside the mouth, eyelids, or genital area
- Body aches, headache, fever, runny nose, cough

## **PREVENTION**

- Good handwashing and avoid contact with others with chickenpox
- Cover coughs and sneezes
- Receive immunization for the virus

## **TREATMENT**

- Anti-viral medications prescribed by your doctor
- Skin care: Calamine, Aveeno, Oatmeal baths
- Fever reducers (no aspirin)

## **RETURN TO SCHOOL**

- When all blisters have scabbed (usually 5-7 days after the rash appears)

## **CALL YOUR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER**

- Fever lasts longer than 4 days or fever above 102°F
- Difficulty waking up or confusion
- Trouble breathing
- Rash with bleeding or bruising

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Information from the Environmental Protection Agency