

## Chicken Pox (Varicella)

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Chicken pox is an infection caused by the varicella virus. People who have had chicken pox or the vaccine should be protected from getting this infection. Chemotherapy can take away this protection. Ask your health care provider if your child is at risk for getting chicken pox.

Symptoms of chicken pox include:

- Rash with small red spots anywhere on the skin
  - These spots often have a clear, fluid filled center
  - New spots can develop for several days
  - The rash is usually very itchy
  - The spots will become dry and crusted as they heal
- Fever

### Exposure

- Chicken pox is usually spread through close contact, through droplets in the air
- Exposure to chicken pox means being around a person who:
  - breaks out with the spots within 1 to 2 days
  - OR
  - has chicken pox
- A contact of five or more minutes is considered an exposure
- The virus can also be spread by contact with zoster blisters

### Treatment

- **If your child is exposed to chicken pox or develops chicken pox, call your care provider immediately.**
  - Your child may need to receive an injection of varicella zoster immunoglobulin (VZIG) to help protect against this virus.
  - If they develop chicken pox they may need antiviral treatment.

## Chicken Pox

### How long are people contagious?

- People with varicella are most contagious for 1 to 2 days before and after the onset of the rash, until the spots are all crusted.
- Your child may develop chickenpox between 10 and 21 days after being exposed.
- If your child received Varicella-Zoster Immune Globulin (VZIG) as a treatment, they will need to be in isolation for 28 days since this can delay the development of chicken pox.

### Special Instructions

- If family members or others in close contact with your child have NOT had the chicken pox, please inform your healthcare providers.
- Talk with your healthcare provider before your child or any family members receive the vaccine.

### Contact Us

**For patient care assistance, please call the following phone numbers:**

- Jimmy Fund Clinic (617) 632-3270  
Business Hours 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday
- Page Operator (617) 632-3352  
Off hours: weekdays after 5 p.m., holidays, and weekends  
Page pediatric hematology/oncology fellow on call
- Life Threatening Emergencies dial 911