



Varicella

Chickenpox is caused by a **virus** called varicella-zoster virus. It is an **infection** that causes itchy, **red bumps** to form on your skin.

When you first get chickenpox, you usually get a **fever**, **feel sick**, get a **sore throat** and **do not feel like eating**.

About a day after these symptoms start, the chickenpox rash appears. It starts out as groups of small **red bumps** that are usually very itchy. These bumps usually **swell with fluid** and then pop. After that, the rash **dries up** and **forms a scab**. The rash lasts about a week.

How does chickenpox spread?

Chickenpox spreads easily to other people by close body contact with the skin blisters of an infected person.

Chickenpox can also spread in the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

Do I need tests?

No, tests are usually not needed. The doctor will diagnose chickenpox by examining you.

How can I treat chickenpox?

Most young children get over chickenpox on their own without any problems. The treatment aims mainly to relieve the itchy or fever symptoms and to prevent skin scarring from the scratching.

Older children and adults with chickenpox can sometimes develop problems and doctors may prescribe a treatment against the virus if necessary.

Make sure to cut your nails short and avoid scratching to prevent skin infections or scarring.

How can I prevent spreading chickenpox?

A person with chickenpox can spread the disease from 1 to 2 days before they get the rash until all their chickenpox blisters have formed scabs.

There is a vaccine that helps keep people from getting infected. If a person vaccinated for chickenpox gets the disease, they can still spread it to others.

Pregnant women and persons with lower immunity defenses should seek a doctor's attention.

Disclaimer: The information in this publication is not meant to replace the advice of a health professional. If you have any questions about your health please contact a health professional.

Resources: UpToDate.com, American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP)

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