

## Varicella (Chickenpox)

Chickenpox is a very common childhood disease. It is caused by a virus and can spread from child to child. Once a child has had chickenpox, he or she usually will not get it again.

Chickenpox is carried through the air by coughing or sneezing. It can also be caught by touching the blisters.

Most children have had a shot to prevent them from getting this disease. Sometimes children who have had the shot still get chickenpox, however it is generally very mild.

Chickenpox usually begins with a fever, headache, crankiness, and loss of appetite. A day or two later a red rash with blisters appears. Those children that have been vaccinated may not get the typical red rash with blisters, but just a red rash and may itch.

In most cases, chickenpox is not serious and does not need to be treated. You should never treat your child's symptoms or fever with aspirin or aspirin-containing medications for viral illnesses, flu or chickenpox. Studies have shown that using these medications to treat symptoms of viral illnesses increases the chance of developing Reye Syndrome. Please contact your healthcare provider if you are concerned about any symptoms your child is experiencing.

**PLEASE do NOT send your child to school if he or she gets a rash.** Keep them at home until they have no new crops of lesions, all lesions have been crusted over and your child is feeling well. You may want to notify the school.

For any further questions or concerns, please contact your health care provider or school nurse. Thank you.