



## HEALTH INFORMATION

# Chickenpox

## What is Chickenpox?

Chickenpox is an infection caused by the varicella-zoster virus. The immune system makes antibodies during the infection. These fight the virus and then provide lifelong immunity.

## What are the symptoms of Chickenpox?

Symptoms are usually more severe in adults than in children.

### Fever aches and headache

Often start a day or so before a rash appears.

### Rash

Spots appear in crops. The spots develop into small blisters and are itchy. They can be anywhere on the body and sometimes also in the mouth.

### Cough

Sore throat, and feeling sick are common.

## Symptomatic treatments

Carbon monoxide poisoning can be confirmed by finding

- Having plenty to drink to avoid dehydration.
- Taking paracetamol or ibuprofen to ease fever, headaches, and aches and pains.
- Calamine lotion put on the spots may ease itching.
- Antihistamine tablets taken at bedtime may help you to sleep if itch is a problem at night. You can buy these at pharmacies, or get them on prescription.

## Who is at risk?

- Anyone who has not had chickenpox or varicella vaccine.
- Pregnant women.
- Those who are immuno-suppressed or having steroid/chemo therapy.
- You can only have chickenpox once so are not at risk if you have had either disease or vaccine.

## Incubation period for chickenpox

A person with chickenpox is very infectious. The virus spreads in the air from person to person. It takes between 7 and 21 days (most commonly 10-14 days) to develop symptoms after catching the virus. A person with chickenpox is infectious from two days before the rash first appears until all the spots have crusted over (commonly about five days after the onset of the illness). Whilst you are infectious, keep away from people who have an increased chance of having a severe illness if they get chickenpox.

**Note:** people with chickenpox should not travel by air until six days after the last spot appeared.