

# CHICKEN POX

## FACT SHEET



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### WHAT IS CHICKEN POX?

Chicken pox is an illness with rash and fever caused by the varicella-zoster virus.

### SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

Rash – small red spots and bumps that blister over 3-4 days then form scabs. Blisters will come out over several days. Someone who has chickenpox for more than a day will have red bumps, blisters, and scabbed over blisters at the same time. Rash may also appear inside the mouth, ears, genital areas, and scalp. Symptoms may also include fever, runny nose and cough.

### HOW IS IT SPREAD?

Chicken pox is airborne. A cough or sneeze release respiratory secretions into the air. The chicken pox particles can attach to dust particles, which can travel along air currents and infect someone in another room. The chicken pox particles may also fall onto surfaces. The virus can be inhaled after fluid escapes from the blisters. Coming in direct contact with lesions of someone with uncovered shingles sores can also spread the virus.

### WHAT ARE INCUBATION AND CONTAGIOUS PERIODS?

Incubation is usually 14 – 16 days, but can be as short as 10 days or as long as 21 days after exposure. Chickenpox is highly contagious. A person may be contagious 1 – 2 days before the rash appears. They are most contagious while the rash is spreading. A person is no longer contagious when the blisters have scabs and there are no new blisters.

### HOW DO YOU KEEP IT FROM SPREADING?

Vaccinate children 12 months and older. A total of 2 doses of vaccine are considered necessary. Someone who has already had chickenpox is considered immune. Use good surface sanitation and hand hygiene.



**EXCLUSION: Exclude from the group setting until rash is crusted over and there are no new blisters.**

