

Chicken Pox

Chicken pox, or herpes zoster, is a virus that infects the body and causes illness. It is spread from one person to another by tiny droplets and secretions. Sneezing, coughing, kissing and sharing toys are common ways to pass the virus.

The incubation period, or the time it takes for the virus to cause symptoms, can be up to 24 days. The first typical sign of the illness is cold-like symptoms such as a runny nose, coughing, and fever. Approximately three to five days after cold symptoms a rash will appear. The rash looks like dots ranging from the size of a pencil eraser to the size of a dime. Within each of these dots is a fluid filled vesicle (like a blister) that may pop in a few days. The lesions may itch, be painful or not be bothersome at all. They may be anywhere on the skin or in the mouth. The lesions usually stop developing after two or three days, but it may take three days for the lesions to crust.

The most contagious time occurs when the person has the cold-like symptoms, before the rash appears. One can infect others before he is even aware that he has chicken pox. The person is usually infectious up to five days or until all the lesions have crusted.

Please contact your child's physician or school nurse if you have questions or desire more information.

Thank you,

Penni Allen, RN