

Dear Parents,

Chickenpox is a very common highly infectious viral disease affecting children and even adults. It is also known as Varicella as it is caused by Varicella Zoster Virus (VZV). Its incidence noted 80- 90 million cases worldwide. In India, the prevalence of the disease in the temperate regions is 13–16/1000 people per year. This incidence of Chickenpox has changed since the introduction of Varicella Vaccine in 1995.

Human beings are the only hosts of this Virus. Chickenpox causes mild disease in children but, can be fatal in young adults, adults, pregnant women, immunocompromised individuals, and neonates. Once infected, most people get lifelong immunity. However, it may develop as Shingles or Herpes Zoster in the form of very painful rash and blister on the Chest Back and Face and all over the body, as the virus remains inactive in the nerve tissue. A Shingles vaccine has been introduced in 2006 and can prevent its incidence.

**Transmission:** - Chickenpox is highly contagious, infecting up to 90% of non-immune individuals. The time from infection to appearance of symptoms ranges from 10 to 21 days. The most infectious period is 1- 2 days before the appearance of rash on the body. But the infectivity continues till all the vesicles (small fluid-filled blisters) are crusted over or at least 5 days after the appearance of the rash.

### **Modes of transmission: -**

- ❖ Inhalation of airborne respiratory droplets from an infected person.
- ❖ Direct contact with the blister fluid.
- ❖ Indirect contact with clothes soiled by blister fluid.
- ❖ **Chickenpox can also be spread by shingles (Herpes Zoster, HZ). A person with HZ can spread chickenpox to those who have never had chickenpox or are not vaccinated.**

### **Symptoms: -**

- ❖ Fever
- ❖ Cough, cold
- ❖ Body ache
- ❖ Headache
- ❖ An intensely itchy, fluid-filled rash appears on the body after 5 days of the above symptoms.

### **Prevention & Treatment: -**

- The best way to prevent chickenpox is to get vaccinated against chickenpox. The vaccine can give over 90% of protection against the disease.

- Everyone, including children, adolescents, and adults should get the chicken pox vaccine if they haven't had chickenpox in their lifetime.
- The treatment is mainly symptomatic to relieve fever and itching. Antivirals may be prescribed depending on the severity of the disease.

**Points to Remember: -**

- Do not attend school or go to work until all the spots have been scabbed.
- Pregnant women, newborns, and people with weakened immune systems must stay away from chickenpox-infected people as it can be dangerous for them.
- Do not scratch the rash.
- Stay away from the person infected with Shingles (Herpes Zoster) if you haven't had chickenpox or you are not vaccinated against it.

Stay healthy, Stay safe!

**With Best Wishes,  
Medical Department,  
Delhi Public School-Bopal, Ahmedabad.**