

Chickenpox: A guide for parents

Dear Parent,

As you may be aware, there has been an incidence of chickenpox at OIS. While we have intimated the child's parents, and taken other precautions, we would like to share some guidelines and precautionary steps for you to consider for your child as well.

Please go through this letter and call us, or write to us, in case there are any further questions or if you require further information. You can call 6130-3535 and ask to speak to me or any of the other physicians, or reach Shivani Dawlatjada at shivani.dawlatjada@healthspring.in.

What is chickenpox?

Chickenpox is a common childhood skin disease caused by varicella-zoster virus. Chickenpox is usually more severe in adults and very young infants than it is in children. Winter and spring are the most common times of the year for chickenpox to occur.

How do you know if your child is infected?

Common symptoms that will help you identify chickenpox in your child include:

- Fever
- Rashes all over body. The rash usually starts on the scalp, then the trunk (its area of greatest concentration), and finally spreads to the arms and legs
- A chickenpox blister looks like a drop of water on your skin, which is a good way to distinguish it from a mosquito bite, or measles which is typically a fine red rash.
- Uncontrollable itching
- Pneumonia

When should you call the doctor?

Chickenpox, once it sets in, takes a few days to subside. Below are a few alerts for you to call in the doctor, if and when your child is down with chickenpox.

- Fever that lasts longer than 4 days or fever that rises above 102°F (38.9°C)
- Any areas of the rash or any part of the body becomes very red, warm, or tender, or begins leaking pus (thick, discoloured fluid), since these symptoms may indicate a bacterial infection
- A stiff neck
- Frequent vomiting
- A severe cough

How do children typically contract chickenpox?

www.healthspring.in | (022) 6130-3535 | ois@healthspring.in
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family doctor



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co-ordination



pharmacy



home care



physiotherapy



vaccination



diet &
nutrition

Chickenpox is a highly contagious disease. It is easily passed between members of families and classmates through airborne particles, droplets in exhaled air, and fluid from the blisters or sores.

Patients are contagious typically up to five days (more commonly, one to two days) before and five days after the date that their rash appears.

What should you do if your child contracts chickenpox?

Treatment involves keeping the child as comfortable as possible. Ensure that the child:

- Avoids scratching or rubbing the itchy areas. Keep fingernails short to avoid damaging the skin from scratching.
- Wears cool, light, loose bedclothes. Avoid wearing rough clothing, particularly wool, over an itchy area.
- Takes lukewarm baths using little soap and rinsing thoroughly.
- Apply a soothing moisturizer or Calamine lotion after bathing to prevent itching.
- Avoid prolonged exposure to excessive heat and humidity.
- A dose of paracetamol could be given for fever. Further medication, if any, is best planned with your physician.

When is your child ready to go back to school?

The minimum period of isolation recommended is seven days from the appearance of a rash and preferably until all the blisters have dried up completely. Please note that all blisters have to dry and the scabs have to have fallen off before a child is ready to come back to school. Otherwise, this is an infection easily passed on to other children who are vulnerable. So please check with your doctor before your child is sent back to school.

How can you protect your child from contracting chickenpox?

The best way to prevent chickenpox is to get the chickenpox vaccine. Children, adolescents, and adults should have two doses of the chickenpox vaccine. Most people who get the vaccine will not get chickenpox. If a vaccinated person does get chickenpox, it is usually mild.

Chickenpox vaccines are commonly available; please visit your family doctor, or come by the Healthspring centre to get your family vaccinated.

We hope this answers your questions; please be assured that Oberoi International School and Healthspring are vigilant, and will help keep your child healthy. Please do feel free to reach out to us if you have any more questions.

Dr. Khullar
Paediatrician, Healthspring

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