

Do you want to know?

Chicken Pox

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What is it?

Chickenpox is an acute viral disease which can easily be spread from one person to another. It is usually acquired during childhood and is characterized by a sudden onset of elevated temperature, tiredness and skin rash. The skin rash starts as a flat rash then acquires an elevation and is filled with fluid. This rash leaves a lesion. These lesions appear more on covered than on exposed parts of the body. Chickenpox is transmitted from person to person through the air (sneezing, coughing), or by contact with the fluid of the chickenpox lesions.

What do you need to know?

Drugs



- Take antiviral drugs as prescribed by the physician.
- Apply calamine lotion or cornstarch or take medication to relieve itching. Avoid greasy lotions and creams.
- Use paracetamol to control the temperature.
- Avoid aspirin-like products

Diet



- Encourage fluid intake to prevent dehydration.
- Eat a balanced diet to compensate for energy loss and enhance recovery.

Activity



- Have adequate rest periods and a calm environment.
- Stay out of school or workplace for at least 5 days or until the lesions become dry.

Therapeutic Measures



- Drink plenty of fluids, do sponge baths and take medication to lower your elevated temperature.

- Maintain a cool environment and put on light clothing to relieve itching associated with sweating.
- Bathe regularly and dry the skin very gently. Keep the lesions clean to prevent secondary infection.

Considerations



- Do not scratch lesions to prevent their spreading, potential scarring or the introduction of bacteria into lesions. Cover infant's hands with gloves.
- Keep finger nails short and clean to prevent infection in case of involuntary scratching (especially important in children).
- Try to avoid scratching by all means.
- Avoid contact with articles freshly soiled by discharges from lesions and fluids of infected persons.
- Advise people in contact to be immunized against chickenpox within 96 hours after exposure if not immune.
- Report the following symptoms of complications: continued high temperature, muscle weakness, neck stiffness, and/or red and painful eyes.

INSTRUCTIONS

The content of this educational leaflet is of general information. Ask your physician or health care provider if this content applies to you.

Prepared by the Nursing Services in coordination with other health care disciplines.